

*Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton*  
**NEWSLETTER**  
**April 2024 - THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS**

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**Tuesday, April 2**

7:00 p.m., Faith in Action Meeting

**Wednesday, April 3**

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

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

**Thursday, April 4**

5:00 p.m., Game Night

**Saturday, April 6**

1:00 p.m., Eileen Raymond's Memorial Service

**Sunday, April 7**

**The Suggestive Reality of Pastor Eckert's Hair**

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

My Lutheran pastor's hair was always perfect. It never needed a cut and was always ordered. It suggested the world was ordered to a young kid like me. I can also think of times when the world was out of control and all I could see around me were instances of chaos. Reality is no one thing, for sure. But maybe it is suggestive and therefore very important to make sure we surround ourselves with the best suggestions.

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

7:00 p.m. Campus Kitchen Meal

**Monday, April 8**

Solar Eclipse Day

**Tuesday, April 9**

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

1:00 p.m., CommComm Meeting

**Wednesday, April 10**

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

**Sunday, April 14**

**The Importance of Giving and Receiving Feedback**

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

We may not like giving or receiving negative feedback. We may not give enough positive feedback. But if we are to grow and learn we need feedback from each other. Let's explore a

tried-and-true method to give and receive feedback that benefits everyone.

3:00 p.m., PIC Sacred Music & Text Event

**Monday, April 15**

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

**Tuesday, April 16**

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

6:30 p.m., RE Committee Meeting

**Wednesday, April 17**

Noon, Budget & Finance Committee Meeting

**Thursday, April 18**

6:00 p.m., Third Thursday Soup

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

**Sunday, April 21**

9:00 a.m., History Circle Meeting

**Earth Sunday: What Beauty Is For**

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

We are surrounded by the beauty of the earth. That beauty can transform us. Let's celebrate Earth Day with our highest praises. For the earth is sacred and we should honor it as such.

Noon, Earth Day Roadside Cleanup

**Monday, April 22 – Earth Day**

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

**Tuesday, April 23**

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

**Saturday, April 27**

Salsa Workshop

**Sunday, April 28**

**Religious Atheism**

*Stevie Michaelson, Pulpit Guest*

From God to Mother Nature and Father Time. Stevie is a lifetime Unitarian Universalist and has been an active member of our Canton church for decades.



## **JAMES' JOURNAL**

### **Even The Sun is Eclipsed by the Moon**

While in the Kinney Drugs, I noticed a display of eclipse related swag. Not only were there eyeglasses but t-shirts, magnets, coffee mugs, and postcards. A quick search on the internet showed eclipse themed earrings, chocolate, posters, and even fragrances. Aren't you curious to know what eclipse perfume smells like? There will be influx of visitors to the North Country to view the eclipse. Anything to make a buck, I guess. I know there are going to be many viewing parties. It's probably going to be a cold and rainy day. I am all about observing natural wonders, but I try to stay away from hype. I love vacations and exploring new areas, but I try to stay away from the fudge shops and amusement parks.

What could the eclipse possibly mean?

The British rock band, Pink Floyd, concludes their epic album *Dark Side of the Moon* with song Eclipse. The last lines are:

*And all that is now  
And all that is gone  
And all that's to come  
And everything under the sun is in tune  
But the sun is eclipsed by the moon*

The song has an Ecclesiastes flavor that encompass everything but then that last line throws us for a loop. Things can seem in unity, perfect and good, in tune. Yet the anomalies of life and death and the darkness of the universe confront us. Sometimes the moon blocks the sun, and the world goes dark at the midday. The universe is reminding us that unexpected darkness is part of life. Unusual darkness can be celebrated and looked upon with mystery and wonder.

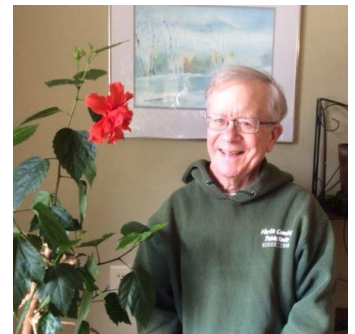
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Galasinski".

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

### **FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

#### **Three and One Half Minutes**

On April 8, 2024, we will have the very rare opportunity to witness a total eclipse of the Sun for roughly three and one-half minutes as the Moon's shadow passes over us.



Sometimes experiencing the briefest events have the most lasting impact on our lives. We each can recall some momentous news flash, or perhaps seeing one's baby for the first time, or realizing that, in an instant, your life will never be the same from that point forward. We react to such events with the full range of emotions. They grab onto us and force us to pay attention. Such dramatic moments cement the memory and remind us that change is fundamental.

The wonderful thing about the upcoming eclipse is that it will be a shared experience by all. No politics, no factions, no pro-eclipse vs. anti-eclipse tribes, no religious affiliation requirements, no eclipse deniers can affect it. It will happen regardless of one's beliefs. We all get to witness its awesome wonder.

Which brings me around to our *openness to wonder* as Unitarian Universalists. We reach out with our minds and hearts to love the Universe. Infrequent big events can have a major impact on us, but the smaller events of every day comprise the bulk of our lifetimes. There is wonder all around us. I feel that our religious community cultivates self-awareness of both the big and the small, and everything in between. This awareness is the first steppingstone on the path to understanding, wisdom, and love.

So, enjoy the eclipse by viewing it safely - the darkening of the Sun and then the three and one-half minutes when you can actually look at it with just your eyes before it begins to brighten again. When it is over, look at each other and consider what a wonder we are and what a wondrous planet it is on which we live.

Happy April,  
*Jon Montan, Church Council President*



## FAITH ENGAGEMENT

*Knock, knock.  
Who's there?  
Wa.  
Wa who?  
What are you so excited about?*

Can laughter be a spiritual practice? During religious education for our second to sixth graders, we have been playing different board and card games. Our focus is to promote laughter and connection.



Laughing has many physical, mental and spiritual benefits. Laughing relieves tension, enhances personal relationships and cultivates mindfulness. Laughter is a great way to improve our overall wellbeing.

Where does laughter and playfulness show up in your life? In the article, *The Connection Between Laughter and Spiritual Growth*, the author Fuyu says it best, "I encourage you to find ways to incorporate joy and playfulness into your daily life, even if it's just for a few minutes each day. You may discover a deeper sense of purpose, fulfillment, and connection in your spiritual journey." May it be so.

Source - <https://www.zen-buddhism.net/the-connection-between-laughter-and-spiritual-growth/>

*Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education*

## JOYS AND SORROWS

-  Longtime member Mary Carmen Earle died in February at the age of 98. Our hearts go out to her friends and family.
-  Freda Bradt, longtime friend of the church, died in February.

- ♥ We send our condolences to the family and friends of Robert Best, who died in March. A memorial service will be held on June 15 at 2 p.m.
- ♥ We are thrilled to announce the arrival of Francis “Frankie” Caroline Pynchon, daughter of Drew & Christine and first grandchild of Tom and Carol Pynchon.
- ♥ The memorial service for Eileen Raymond will be on Saturday, April 6 at 1:00 p.m. If you can't make it to Canton for the service, please join us [via Zoom](#).



- Thank you Peter Brouwer for leading another successful Enneagram Workshop
- Thanks to Kim Bouchard who led an inspiring four-part storytelling workshop.
- Thank you Larissa Fawkner for facilitating a successful Sacred Scents Workshop
- Karen Wells, Pat Alden, Helen Hutchinson, Sharon Tavernier, Linda Kenny, Louise Bixby, Arlene Oey, Stevie Michaelson, Kylie Frank for baking cakes for Everybody’s Birthday Party and Ron Tavernier and Sally Hoose for organizing the event.
- Margaret Mauch, Phil Collins, Esther Oey and Stevie Michaelson for leading the Kitchen Cabinet and making sure our kitchen is clean and ordered.
- John Danis, Steve Manders, Tim Savage, and Rev. James for playing at the Jazz and Coffee nights and for Jenn and Erik Whittaker, Allen Gontz, Larissa Fawkner for setting up. And to all who brought treats and soaked up the music!

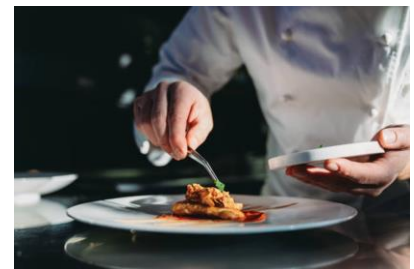
### FROM YOUR WORSHIP TEAM

Now that the crocuses are blooming, we know your thoughts are turning to summer. So, turn your thoughts to our summer worship series! We are looking for your input as we consider summer worship at UU. We want to provide an experience that is spiritually meaningful with a summertime feel. If you have ideas for the summer, please chat with Rev. James or any member of the worship team – Dave Bradford, Mark Berninghausen, Cathy Crosby, Mary Michalek, Rajiv Narula, or Dave Nelson – or drop an email to [worship@uucantonny.org](mailto:worship@uucantonny.org).

Thanks!  
*Your Worship Team*

### Gourmet Dining for a Great Cause – Our UU Community

Dinners are selling out fast! There are still spots available for three Gourmet Dining for a Great Cause dinners to raise funds to support our 2024 operating budget. We are sure one of the incredible menus from our renowned chefs will capture your fancy so check them out [here](#). To sign-up for a dinner, please email [office@uucantonny.org](mailto:office@uucantonny.org). A member of the stewardship committee will get back to you to confirm your dinner reservation. Please send a check for \$65 (note Gourmet Dining on the memo line) to



the office or you can drop your check in the offering plate on Sunday. Feel free to use your Venmo or Vanco account and note "Gourmet Dining" in the "what's this for" box. We realize budgets are tight; funds have been donated to assist anyone interested in attending a dinner. Please speak with Reverend James for more information.

*Stewardship Committee*



## **SOCIAL ACTION SHARED OFFERING (SASO)**

On Sunday, April 28 our Social Action Shared Offering (SASO) will support *Seeds of Peace*, an organization that hosts Israeli and Palestinian teens for a conflict resolution summer camps to change the future of the region by teaching the processes of peace.

Unitarian Universalists have always affirmed peace as among our most basic values. We have worked to create the kinds of just communities out of which peace emerges, and we have long supported the use of nonviolent methods of conflict resolution.

Seeds of Peace, founded in 1993, is a leadership development organization committed to transforming legacies of conflict into courage to lead change. The organization equips new generations of leaders with the tools to transform conflict. Seeds of Peace develops courageous leaders who work in solidarity across differences to create more just and inclusive societies.

Seeds of Peace is aligned with UU perspectives on Unity, Love, Inherent Worth, Freedom (and War as a Choice that we can choose not to make), as well as just actions and speaking out and acting to prevent unjust actions, and exercising Power for Good.

To learn more about Seeds of Peace visit: [www.seedsofpeace.org](http://www.seedsofpeace.org)

## **CARING CIRCLE**

Would you like to be able to help fellow UU members and friends by sending a card during challenging times, providing a ride to a doctor's appointment, bringing a meal, or helping out at a memorial service reception? Join the Caring Circle! The Caring Circle is a group that responds when our members experience special needs and challenges due to illness, birth/adoption, death, and other life changes. The impact of these challenges can be eased by our caring for one another, person to person, family to family.



You can sign up to participate in one or more of the list activities: general (notes, calls), rides only, meals only, memorial service receptions only. To join the Caring Circle, sign up [here](#).

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The RE committee is currently seeking one or more members. We are also always appreciative of new volunteers as teachers and/or assistants for our children's classes.

## RACHEL SOMERS GRANT SOCIAL ACTION AWARD

**Seeking Nominations for the 2024:** Each year, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton recognizes an individual who is making a difference in our community with an award established in 1990 in memory of Rachel Somers Grant. Rachel was a teacher and activist who lived in Canton from 1977 until her death in 1990. The award was established to honor those who work, as Rachel did, to make ours a more humane and progressive community.

Recent recipients of the award have included Ginger Storey-Welch, Eileen Raymond, Kathleen Stein and Donna Seymour.

Rachel believed grassroots movements were an effective means of achieving change. She challenged the lack of responsiveness of elected officials on issues important to her community, and she was a strong advocate for causes affecting the welfare of women, families, and the environment. She had a gift for organizing diverse groups and a talent for gaining the respect of supporters and opponents alike.

Nominations for the 2024 Rachel Somers Grant Award should explain how the nominee exemplifies some of the following criteria.

- promotion of local grassroots efforts as a means of achieving social change
- advocacy on behalf of social justice, especially for those who are marginalized in some way
- active involvement in a variety of local groups working for a better community
- history of organizing, involving, and supporting community members in pursuit of social justice

Nominations are due Friday, April 26, 2024, and may be emailed to [socialaction@uucantonny.org](mailto:socialaction@uucantonny.org), or dropped off at the church office.

## GAME NIGHT

Join us on **Thursday, April 4 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 in the social room and enjoy a relaxing evening of fun and fellowship. Want to stay up to date on all the game nights? Join the [private facebook group](#)! Contact [Carlene Bermann](#) if you have any questions.



## THIRD THURSDAY SOUP



Come enjoy dinner with fellow UUers on **Thursday, April 18 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.

Email [outreach@uucantonny.org](mailto:outreach@uucantonny.org) with questions or to sign up to make soup for any of the meals.

## SCIENCE BOOK CLUB

On **Thursday, April 18**, the Science Book Club will be reading *Dogs that Know When Their Owners are Coming Home* by Rupert Sheldrake. The group meets at 7:00p.m. by Zoom. To sign up or for more information, email Brian Gardam at [briangardam@gmail.com](mailto:briangardam@gmail.com).

## EARTH DAY ROADSIDE CLEAN UP

Join us after worship on **Sunday, April 21** to help clean up our adopted section of Riverside Drive in Canton. We will depart from the church parking lot at noon. Bring your work gloves and bright colored clothes. Garbage bags will be provided. If you're planning to join us and/or you have any questions, please email [outreach@uucantonny.org](mailto:outreach@uucantonny.org).



## NOCO COMPOST

Have you been bringing your compost to church? Did you know the white bucket with the green lid that sits outside the back door of the church is available for anyone to use? Just bring your compost from home and put it in the bucket. Greg will pick up the full bucket and leave an empty one each Sunday. It's a wonderfully easy way to reduce landfill waste. Email [nococompost@gmail.com](mailto:nococompost@gmail.com) if you have questions or want to learn more.

## HELP THE CHURCH BE GREEN!

In order to reduce the waste we produce, our cleaner uses washable cleaning cloths and mop heads. We are seeking a designated volunteer who would be willing to wash these supplies once every few weeks or once per month and bring them back to church. This is an ideal opportunity for someone who likes to contribute to the church but can't commit to some of the bigger tasks or committees. Could you do one load of laundry per month for the church? Please email [office@uucantonny.org](mailto:office@uucantonny.org)

**UUBay**  
a community exchange

## UUBAY

UUBay is alive and well. We hope you're enjoying its benefits. Don't know what UUBay is? It's a goods and services exchange whose primary purpose is to build community, with the added benefit that sometimes that community-building includes supporting our budget.

**Who may take part?** Members and friends of the UU Church of Canton.

**What is its purpose?** It's a place to re-home (sell, give away) items to one another, ask for or offer help or services, tap into the collective knowledge of the congregation, or seek a greeting or social hour date switch. For items exchanged for money, an optional gift of all or part of the proceeds generated can be directed to the church. A win-win!

To use it, simply send an email to [UUBay@uucantonny.org](mailto:UUBay@uucantonny.org) briefly stating what you need, what you're selling, or what service you might provide. Other group members will respond to you directly, and you can take the conversation from there off-list.

Only members of UUBay can send messages, so if you're not already a UUBay member and would like to be, email [office@uucantonny.org](mailto:office@uucantonny.org) and ask to be added.

More information can be found on our website [here](#).



Potsdam Interfaith Community's (PIC) annual **Festival of Sacred Music and Text** is scheduled for **3:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 14** at First Presbyterian Church (42 Elm Street, Potsdam). Please watch for further details in church and local media. Contact Pat Alden or Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel, our PIC co-liaisons, with questions.

A Trip to the [2024 Ottawa Tulip Festival](#)! A caravan of cars is being planned for **Saturday, May 11th**. We will gather in the church parking lot at 9 a.m. and then divide into cars. We'll meet in ByWard Market and have lunch. And of course, tour all the beautiful tulips! If you're interested or would like to know more, email [outreach@uucantonny.org](mailto:outreach@uucantonny.org).



**Our Annual Church Picnic** will be held on **Sunday, June 9, 2024** at Bend in the River Park in Canton. If you can help with the planning, please email [outreach@uucantonny.org](mailto: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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