

Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton
NEWSLETTER
April 2025 - THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS



Wednesday, April 2

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

Friday, April 4

5:30 p.m., Together at the Table

Saturday, April 5

4:00 p.m., UU D&D

Sunday, April 6

The Fabric of Our Congregation

The Rev. James Galasinski

We are all threads, people connected to one another through strings of relationships. These connections make up our community. We weave and strengthen connections between each other. Sharing stories, every day and cultural stories, is one powerful connection-making toolkit to build beloved community.

11:30 a.m., Social Hour Host & Greeter 101

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

2:00 p.m., Facing the Present with Heart

Tuesday, April 8

9:30 a.m., Sacred Texts and Coffee

1:00 p.m., CommComm Meeting

7:00 p.m., Social Action Team Meeting

Thursday, April 10

6:00 p.m., Second Thursday Listening Circle

Friday, April 11

12:30 p.m., Second Friday Listening Circle

5:00 p.m., Tai Chi Workshop (WiSPP)

Saturday, April 12

4:00 p.m., UU D&D

Sunday, April 13

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

Heirs of the Past, Hope for the Future

The Rev. Dr. Nicole Kirk, Pulpit Guest

Universalism swept through New England, New York, and North America throughout the nineteenth century. Yet by the merger with the Unitarians in 1961, many Universalists feared that the Unitarians would subsume Universalism. In the twenty-first century, Universalism is thriving and at the center of Unitarian Universalist theology and shared values. This Sunday, we explore some of the ways Universalism's past is shaping our future.

Monday, April 14

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Tuesday, April 15

1:30 p.m., Membership & Outreach Team Meeting

6:30 p.m., Religious Education Committee Meeting

Thursday, April 17

6:00 p.m., Third Thursday Soup

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

Friday, April 18

5:00 p.m., Game Night

Saturday, April 19

4:00 p.m., UU D&D

6:00 p.m., The Cicada Also Sings

Sunday, April 20

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

The Other Book of God *The Rev. James Galasinski*

Some people look to books to explore spirituality. But there is a greater book. Just look below and above you. Note it. Read it. Nature speaks of a god of dirt. Come, as we celebrate Earth Day and Easter.

Tuesday, April 22

9:30 a.m., Sacred Texts and Coffee

4:00 p.m., Pastoral Care Team Meeting

Wednesday, April 23

Noon, Budget & Finance Meeting

Friday, April 25

6:00 p.m., Jazz & Coffee Night

Saturday, April 26

8:30 a.m., Beyond the Binary Conference

4:00 p.m., UUs D&D

Sunday, April 27

9:00 a.m., History Circle

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

Smooth Stones of Liberal Religion: Prophets of Justice and Love *The Rev. James Galasinski*

We have been exploring what makes our religious movement unique by looking at the UU theologian James Luther Adams. He says that one of our 5 foundational stones is that we affirm "the moral obligation to direct one's effort toward the establishment of a just and loving community. It is this which makes the role of the prophet central and indispensable."

1:00 p.m., PIC Sacred Music & Text Concert in Potsdam

Monday, April 28

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



JAMES' JOURNAL

The Art of Gathering

Why do we gather? Not, why are we Unitarian Universalists, but why do we congregate for worship? Well, I might get as many answers as there are members of this congregation: intellectual stimulation, the music, the friends, the inspiring sermons, the community, the learning, and the spiritual growth. Or how about because deep beneath all the cruel turmoil of the world, there is a common bond knit within us. We are all part of some unnamable mystery. We are all children of the same universe. We all have dignity and deserve to give and receive love. We all need weekly reminders of a spiritual grounding in order to truly live life.

A question I often ask myself when I am preparing worship:

What is the need for these people at this time?

Sometimes it is obvious because there is something going on in the congregation. But oftentimes it is not so clear. There is a plethora of needs that can't be summed up in one easy answer. Lately, it might be the weight and hurt of country -seemingly going in the direction of authoritarianism and oligarchy.

What is it we need and want when we gather? Week by week it might change. Some semblances of hope that we can make it through another week. Or maybe it's a small spark of insight that helps us come to a big decision. We need to gather to celebrate what we have and mourn what we have lost. We need to come together to remind ourselves we are not alone. There are other people out there who have minds like our own, who thirst for justice, and aim to extend compassion out.

There is an art to gathering and it needs to be named and articulated to bring out its truest meaning.

In Peace,

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

The Rev. James Galasinski



FAITH ENGAGEMENT

The transformation of spring is upon us! In April, the religious education program will be exploring the UU shared value of transformation. This value calls us to adapt to the changing world. We covenant to collectively transform and grow spiritually and ethically. Openness to change is fundamental to our Unitarian and Universalist heritages, never complete and never perfect. We are looking to change the religious education ministry to best meet the needs of our children, youth and families. Church Council hosted an information gathering meeting on March 9. If you were unable to attend and have suggestions for how you think our program should be adapting to our changing times, please reach out to [Jim Williams](#) or [Carol Zimmerman](#).

Check out what's happening for children and youth in April. Plan to join us for the [Together at the Table](#) dinner on Friday, April 4 at 5:30pm (RSVP required by March 28). Plan to join [Potsdam Pride](#) on Saturday, April 5 from 10am-1pm for a LGBTQ+ Youth and Family Connection Fair. We will be a virtual host site for the Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary Conference on Saturday, April 26. Learn more [here](#) and keep your eyes out on our website and in e-news for more details. Our religious education age specific classes will meet on April 6 and 13. There will be a fun day on April

20. We will have an all ages Living Our Values Every Day (LOVED) program on April 27. All the details are available on the church website and social media pages. May we continue to grow and adapt to the changing world together. Blessed be.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

FROM OUR PRESIDENT A Welcoming Congregation

Many factors contribute to an individual's decision to participate in and, in some cases, become a member of our church. It might be the intellectually stimulating sermons, the spiritually uplifting music, the meaningful religious education, the positive community found around a game board, or many other factors. The diversity of reasons that led each of us to this church also contribute to the richness of our community.



For many of us, the church's commitment to being a welcoming congregation, symbolized by the flags that flank the pulpit, factored into our decision to become part of this community. Given recent events, including several executive orders, I find myself grateful that I am part of a community that values individuals of all genders and sexualities.

Let me share with you two recent actions that express that commitment to being a welcoming community and provide an opportunity to learn more:

- You will find a new page on our church website dedicated to our being a welcoming community, thanks to the efforts of Jenn Whittaker, under the Our Church tab on the main page. This page provides some background on our history of becoming a welcoming congregation as well as links to resources and events. Check it out [here](#)!
- We have also registered to be a satellite congregation for the Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary conference taking place on Saturday, April 26. More details are provided in this newsletter and [here](#). If you would like to be part of our church's planning team, spearheaded by Paul Siskind, please drop me a note (president@uucantonny.org).

We are glad you are here.

Take care,
Cathy Crosby, Church Council President

THANK UU



- THANK YOU to the crew that showed up and built THE RAMP for the side door.
- Thank you to the B&G team that has worked tirelessly to secure grant funding for the new furnaces, dealing with the smoke detectors & fire alarms, broken dishwashers, elevators, bats, and more...
- Thank you to Carol Opdyke, Todd Moe, Jenn Whittaker, Mary Michalek, Rachelle Bullene, Sharon and Ron Tavernier, Bonnie Danis, Harper Terrell, Kim Bouchard, Louise Bixby, Esther Oey and Sally Hoose for baking cakes for Everybody's Birthday.
- Dave Nelson for leading a LOVED class for our children and youth about Quakerism.

- Rajiv Narula for leading a LOVED class for our children and youth about Hinduism.
- Huge thank you to Dan Burton who showed up to wash dishes when the dishwasher was broken.



JOYS & SORROWS

- While we will miss Joan Kepes being in our midst each Sunday, we are glad to report that she is settling into her new home in Vermont. We can keep Joan close by corresponding with her at: 34 North Street, Apt. 211, Vergennes VT 05491
- We grieve with Arthur Freeheart, whose son, Richard (known as Dizzy), died on February 26th in Minneapolis.
- Debra Mitchell is recovering well from knee surgery. We are grateful for that and all those who helped her through that experience.

UU BIRTHDAYS

If you're inclined to send a birthday card, addresses can be found in the [church directory online](#). If you'd like to *support* the [Caring Circle](#), fill out [this form](#) and join us in supporting members in a variety of ways! Email caringcircle@uucantonny.org to add any birthday names that are missing!

April 5:	Margaret Harloe	April 17:	Theresa Witmer
April 8:	Ira Thomas	April 19:	Tim Nolan Geri Clover
April 9:	Noah Rousell	April 23:	Heather Rousell Carol Strome
April 11:	Rebecca Rivers, Gary Hoose, Katelyn Jessmer	April 25:	Pete Wyckoff
April 13:	Pat Glover Gabrielle Clover	April 26:	Janet McFarland
April 14:	Ari Whittaker	April 28:	Nancy Cleary
April 15:	Joya Blondel	April 29:	Pete Beekman

BICENTENNIAL EVENTS

Our next **Bicentennial Sunday will be April 13 with the Rev. Dr. Nicole Kirk** in the pulpit. Nicole Kirk is the Frank and Alice Schulman Chair of Unitarian Universalist History at Meadville Lombard Theological School and the Program Minister at All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she resides. Her work as a historian is animated by questions that emerge from archival research, her work in the classroom, and the complex questions about the relationship between business, infrastructure, mobility, and religion. Nicole is the author of *Wanamaker's Temple: The Business of Religion in an Iconic Department Store*. She is working on a book, Circus Day: Religion and the Circus. At All Souls, Nicole focuses her work with the church's social justice council and teams.

Sacred Sites Open House, Saturday, May 17th, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Our beloved UU Church of Canton will be part of a New York state-wide event sponsored by the New York Landmarks Conservancy. This year's theme is "Building for Eternity: Religious Architecture and Artisans", and participating congregations will showcase their buildings and histories through guided tours, lectures, and musical performances. The Bicentennial Team and Building and Grounds Committee will be seeking volunteers to assist with welcoming, greeting, refreshments, and guiding tours. It will be a fun day to welcome guests into our beloved church building and acknowledge its beauty

and history. Look for more information in future newsletters and to sign up for volunteer opportunities. For more information on Sacred Sites Open Houses you can visit <https://nylandmarks.org/sacred-sites-open-house-tool-kit/>

Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton



Seeking JUSTICE
Extending COMPASSION
Choosing LOVE

www.uucantonny.org



CHECK OUT THE BICENTENNIAL BANNERS!

Many thanks to Jennifer Whittaker and Pete Beekman for creating and organizing the new banner that is currently hanging in the Social Room. That banner is intended to be hung outdoors at various locations throughout the county and at various events this year. There are also banners that will be on the front

yard of the church and will be installed in conjunction with the Spring Cleaning. Hurray for the public proclamation of our values!

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE:

We love when people donate books to the Coots Library. Please place donations in the wicker basket on the floor by the window and include a note with your name that this is a donated book. Please be aware that we cannot keep every donation, but we review books carefully and keep those that align with the categories in our collection and the overall mission of the church.

Categories in the Adult Collection are:

- U.U. History, Memoir, and Guides
- Church Administration and Leadership
- World Religions
- Religious Commentary and Reflections
- Social Issues
- Literature
- Biography and Memoirs(non-U.U.)
- U.U. Meditation Manuals
- Miscellaneous-ANYTHING ELSE!

To check out a book, please make sure we have your contact information on file in the office or in the church directory. Each book has a checkout card in the back of the book that you can sign. The checkout card can then be placed in the wooden card holder on the table. We hope you will take time after service to visit our library soon!

Lorraine Olendzenski, Library Committee

RSG SOCIAL ACTION AWARD

Our Social Action Team is receiving nominations for the 2025 [Rachel Somers Grant Social Action Award](#). We are seeking nominations for individuals who make a difference through their grassroots efforts in pursuit of social justice for all.

Nominations for the 2025 RSG Social Action Award should explain how the nominee exemplifies some of the following criteria:

- ☐ Promotes local grassroots efforts as a means of achieving social change
- ☐ Advocates on behalf of social justice, especially for those who are marginalized in some way

- ☐ Is actively involved in a variety of local groups working for a better community
- ☐ Provides leadership in promoting social justice and change
- ☐ Organizes and supports community members in pursuit of social justice

This is a wonderful way to recognize and celebrate people who give so much and who often are otherwise underrecognized. Please consider nominating someone you know; it need not be a UU friend or member. Please send nominations via email to our [Social Action team](#) no later than **Friday, April 4, 2025**.

COME SING IN THE CHOIR!

New and returning singers are invited to sing with our UU Church Choir for special themed services and events throughout the year. Along with being “in the choir” on a regular basis, *we’re also inviting new singers to join for individual services/events/themes which particularly interest you.* The Choir rehearses at 9:00-10:00 am on the Sunday the week before the performance service, as well as 9:00-10:00 am on the day of the performance service. Email paul@paulsiskind.com to sign up and get more information.

Earth Day Sunday, April 20 at 10:30 a.m.:

Rehearsal on April 13 at 9 a.m. downstairs in the choir room & April 20 at 9 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Potsdam Interfaith Community Music Festival Sunday, April 27 at 3 p.m.

Concert will be held at St. Mary’s Church in Potsdam. This is an annual gathering of musicians from churches around the area. Each group sings a few songs. We will probably sing *Zikr*, along with another song from Earth Day or a previous service.

FROM YOUR SOCIAL ACTION TEAM:

Helping Immigrants and their Families

The Trump Administration is targeting immigrants and visitors in the US. We can expect these actions to impact our community in various ways, including increased random checkpoints and traffic stops by Border Patrol, as well as ICE raids on local farms.

Our SA Team will be partnering with the Cornell Farmworker Program and similar organizations to disseminate information about immigrant rights (and citizen rights!), as well as organizing information sessions about Know Your Rights and Helping Immigrant Families. Please keep an eye out for more information about these important events and click [here](#) to learn more and access more resources.

Medical Aid in Dying:

This spring, our congregation will continue supporting the campaign to pass the Medical Aid in Dying bill at the State Capitol. The legislation would allow a terminally ill adult with a prognosis of 6 months or less to live to have the option to request, obtain, and decide to ingest medication to die peacefully in their sleep if their suffering is unbearable; it is sometimes referred to as Death With Dignity. Only 10 states allow medical aid in dying to be available, and the issue is one of the priority issues for [NYUU Justice](#). [Compassion & Choices](#) organizes the legislative efforts, and they also offer [valuable information and resources](#) for individuals and families facing end-of-life decisions.

Upcoming Social Action Team meetings:

The Social Action Team invites all congregants to bring us your ideas for social justice issues, events, and projects that you think our congregation might be interested in engaging with. *Please bring your*

ideas for issues/events/projects to the SA Team by e-mailing socialaction@uucantonny.org, or by attending our next meeting on **Tuesday, April 15 at 7 p.m. in the Romer Room or [by Zoom](#)** We will work with you to develop and implement your ideas.

UUs and D&D

Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) has seen a resurgence in recent years due to appearances in pop culture and the pandemic. But is it possible that Dungeons & Dragons can be more than just a game? Join us **Saturdays at 4 p.m.** in the Social Room for an afternoon of D&D.

All ages are welcome, though younger brave hearts should bring an adult mentor. Let us know if you'll join us by emailing toddamoe@gmail.com.

SOCIAL HOST & GREETER 101 **Sunday, April 6 at 11:45 a.m. in the Romer Room**

Throughout the year, you will have the opportunity to serve as a social hour host or greeter. Have you wondered what this entails? Have you been a social hour host but are still nervous about using our coffee pot? Do you know what the jobs of greeters are? On April 6, following service, members of Church Council will offer an information session for new or experienced hosts and greeters to review the details of these important roles. This is a great chance to become familiar with how things work behind the scenes.

The event will take place from 11:45 until 12:30. Please join us in the Romer Room after you grab a cup of coffee.



FACING THE PRESENT WITH HEART **Sunday, April 6 at 2 p.m.**

In these challenging times, we are not alone. Please join us in [Facing the Present with Heart](#): a mindful listening circle, in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh.

We will practice breathing meditation to reduce stress and facilitate understanding and compassion. And we will listen deeply and mindfully to each other as we share how we're feeling, our struggles, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears.

Facilitated by Jenna Joya Blondel, PhD, Minister of Walking Prayer, we meet on the first Sunday of the month from 2 to 3 p.m. in Canton at the Unitarian Universalist Church; and on the third Thursday of the month from 6 to 7 p.m. in Potsdam at Trillium at the Presbyterian Church. There is no charge, and all are welcome.

TAI CHI FOR IMAGINATION (WiSPP) **Friday, April 11 at 5 p.m.**

A Tai Chi for Imagination: Undulations in Nature Workshop will be led by master Sean Boutin on Friday, April 11, from 5 – 7 p.m. in the Social Room. Imagine moving like a kelp forest in the surf, or a white crane spreading its wings before retreating like a monkey. While Tai Chi is a martial art, it relies

in observing the ways in which qi (energy) “plays” through the bodies of humans and other friends in the natural world. As we discover the ways in which play manifests in nature, we unlock a deeper understanding of the human potential for equilibration. The workshop will help participants improve balance, posture, and mental awareness. The program is free, advance registration is recommended. Sign up online here: <https://forms.gle/T9C4wqv9RpTrtVw5>.

THE SOUND OF SALVATION: JAPANESE BAMBOO FLUTE & ZEN MUSIC (WiSPP) **Monday, April 14 at 12:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence University**

The Sound of Salvation: Japanese Bamboo Flute and Zen Music concert will be presented in partnership with St. Lawrence University’s Religious Studies Department.

Experience an unforgettable journey of global music, Monday, April 14, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. in the St. Lawrence University Sullivan Center, Winston Room, with the Aeolian Trio. The concert offers a unique experience bringing together the extraordinary talents of shakuhachi (flute) master and California native Bruce Huebner, New York-based Japanese guitarist Shu Odamura, and percussion virtuoso Todd Isler, whose expertise spans South Asian and Middle Eastern rhythms. The Sound of Salvation concert is being offered to the community as part of a four-day musician’s residency.

As an added treat, the trio will be performing during our worship service on Sunday, April 13.

THIRD THURSDAY SOUP

Come enjoy dinner with fellow UUs on **Thursday, April 17 at 6 p.m.** We will share 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 with questions or to sign up to make soup for any of the meals. **This is the last Third Thursday Soup until Fall!**



GAME NIGHT

Join us on Friday, **April 18 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.

UU 101 **Saturday, April 19 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

This is a new member orientation class intended for new members and folks thinking about becoming members. Led by the Rev. James Galasinski, it will include fun and interactive introductions to UU theology, history, and how the congregation works. We will also learn about each other’s spiritual journeys. Lunch will be provided. Childcare will be available upon request. Please sign up by emailing office@uucantonny.org

THE CICADA ALSO SINGS (WiSPP)
Saturday, April 19 at 5 p.m.

An introduction to Latin American music and musicians and how the songs intersect with UU values.

JAZZ NIGHT & COFFEE BAR

FRIDAY, April 25
6:30 – 8:30 p.m. in the Social Room



The house band that started it all will sing and play jazz standards, originals, funk, straight ahead, blues, and Latin styles. Hailey Hodge - Vocals, John Danis EWI and vocals, Ben Richey - Drums, Tim Savage - Piano, the Rev. James Galasinski - Bass

This event is open to the public so be sure to invite your friends! Admission is free, but donations of non-perishable food items for the Church and Community Food Pantry are encouraged.

BUILDING BELOVED COMMUNITY: BEYOND THE BINARY CONFERENCE
Saturday, April 26 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. in the Social Room

We have to register our church as a satellite host for the [Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary](#) Conference, presented by the First UU Society of Syracuse. We will stream the conference here in our Social Room and provide a supportive space for transgender people and their allies to gather together for fellowship to watch the conference. Since we are registered as a satellite host; there is no need to register as individuals to attend our streaming event.

Stay tuned for more announcements about this event, as we might add additional local programming events.

FESTIVAL OF SACRED MUSIC AND TEXT
Sunday, April 27 at 3:00 p.m. at St. Mary's Church in Potsdam

Please join the Potsdam Interfaith Community (PIC) for our annual Festival of Sacred Music and Text at St. Mary's Church (20 Lawrence Ave., Potsdam) on Sunday, April 27 at 3:00 p.m. Following the presentations there will be refreshments and casual conversation in the basement, which is accessible by elevator in the rear of the building. Gluten free options available. Contact Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel with any questions at potsdaminterfaith@gmail.com or speak with Pat Alden or Sarah B-G, our congregation's PIC co-liaisons. We hope you will join us!

SPRING WORK DAY
Saturday, May 3 at 9:00 a.m.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Our annual spring cleaning of the outside and inside of the church will take place on Saturday, May 3 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. All hands on deck will make the work fun and satisfying. Any amount of time you can contribute will be appreciated and there is a variety of work so everyone can find something that will make our church a Welcoming Spruced up Space!

Let us join together to ready the church for the spring and summer events happening during our Bi-centennial year!

UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY JUNE 2025

Please consider attending this June 18-22, 2025 in Baltimore, MD. General Assembly provides an opportunity to connect with others from around the country who share our love of our free faith. We need delegates. You can find more information about GA here: <https://www.uua.org/ga>. Church Council has set aside special funds to help defray the cost of attendance and financial aid is available from the UUA (<https://www.uua.org/ga/registration/financialaid/scholarships>). If you have interest in attending this year's General Assembly, please contact Rev. James (minister@uucantonny.org) or Church Council President Cathy Crosby (president@uucantonny.org).

Staff Schedules for the Church Year:

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 from 9 a.m.– 2p.m.

The church office is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9a.m. until 2p.m.
You can always check [the calendar on our website](#) for details.

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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