



Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton **NEWSLETTER**

Summer 2025

Church Calendar

As our services, events, and meetings unfold (and are sometimes updated) throughout the Summer, we encourage you to keep checking the Church Calendar on our website, and in our weekly E-News. You can click [HERE](#) to view it online, or if you need assistance with other formats, please don't hesitate to contact the church office at: office@uucantonny.org, or 315-386-2498.

Join us for special Summer Services

July 6th - The Beauty of Nature Outdoor Service in the pavilion at Ives Park in Potsdam, at 10:30 am

We will convene at the pavilion and share poems, personal stories, and songs in appreciation of this wondrous planet that we call home.

July 13th - The Power of Now Coffee and Conversation

In this Coffee and Conversation Worship Service congregants in attendance will break into three groups where a member of the "Sacred Text and Coffee" group will lead a reading of a few pages of Eckhart Tolle's text followed by about a 20 minute discussion.

July 20th - Intellectual Freedom and the Unitarian Universalist

The fourth Unitarian Universalist principle is "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning." One of the key ways we learn of others' truths, and can thus develop empathy and compassion, is through stories. Limiting access to information in the form

of book bans is in direct conflict with what we believe. Join Mary Michalek and others as we consider the deep danger of the "single story" and what we can do to defy it.

July 27th - The Common Good

Rev. Barb Sajna, Pulpit Guest

What do we owe each other? We will look at what the common good is, our motivations and responsibility to protect it as we reflect upon the Good Samaritan story.

The Rev. Barb Sajna is a retired Episcopal priest who recently moved to the North Country.

August 3rd - What Does Beloved Community Look Like?

Cathy Crosby, Church Council President

In this Coffee and Conversation service, we will discuss in small groups what beloved community looks like as well as other questions meant to help us explore the implied promises we make about how we will be together. Join us on this early step in our journey to a congregation-wide covenant!

August 10th - Why Knot? An Experiential Service

Carol Zimmerman, DRE

From functional to artistic and practical to spiritual, knot tying and the knots created have symbolic as well as pragmatic significance. We will untangle these notions and learn to tie the best knot for the task.

August 17th - Poetry Service

Mark Berninghausen, Worship Team

It is Mark's request that congregants submit two original poems to be read during the Worship Service on August 17th. Please submit your poems to Mark, by hand, by email at markberninghausen@gmail.com, or by snail mail to Mark Berninghausen 437 Hurley Road, Brasher Falls, NY 13613.

Please submit your poems as soon as possible so the service can be assembled in a timely fashion.

August 24th - The Interconnect Web of Time

Rev. Doug McCusker

One of our shared Unitarian Universalist values is Interconnection. It urges us to

respect the interconnected web of all life of which we are a part. One of the ways that we are interconnected is through our ancestors and future generations who will inherit what we create. Human inheritance is part of the long-running story of culture and character. Stories of love and fear; grace and malice come not only from our own experiences, but from ancestral history within a tradition. Rev. Doug McCusker will reflect on that aspect of the Spirit of Life which is comprised of the spirit of our ancestors.

Rev. Douglas McCusker (he/him) is a retired Unitarian Universalist minister with extensive experience in parish ministry, religious education, and social justice ministry. He served two congregations as a parish minister: UU Congregation of Rockville, MD and the UU Fellowship of Fredericksburg, VA. He also led a Unitarian Universalist group at the Coffeewood Correctional Center in Virginia. He is on the Nature staff and Healthy Relations team of the Southeast UU Summer Institute. Rev. Doug identifies as a BIPOC, second-generation Colombian-American. He is a certified Mindfulness Outdoor Guide who has led many groups in Shin-rin Yoku (Forest Bathing). Rev. Doug and his spouse Marie live in North Adams, MA.

August 31st - Transitioning Into New Identities, The Rev. James Galasinski

As we grow and age our identities often change. Maybe we identified as athletes but are no longer physically able. We have rites of passages for the bigger transitions in life but these smaller identity transitions can be tricky to cope with.





JAMES' JOURNAL - Keeping Love Alive

At the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly in Baltimore, MD

Imara Jones, a journalist and trans activist, eloquently spoke at the Ware Lecture how Christian nationalists united the right with anti-trans rhetoric. It was an orchestrated campaign to win the 2024 presidential campaign and largely worked. The anti-trans movement included pseudo-scientific research, books, press releases, and commercials that attempted to erase trans identity and cast doubt on trans existence. This united coalition against trans rights promised a better nation without trans people in it. The Heritage Foundation even tried infiltrating liberal groups to sow doubt and misinformation. Many of these attacks went unanswered by Democrats.

Now we have seen a wave of anti-trans legislation and executive orders across the nation that take away civil rights of trans people. For example, Iowa removed gender identity from its civil rights law which means you can be fired and or not allowed housing for being trans. President Trump made it illegal for trans people to serve in the military. More recently, the Supreme Court ruled to allow states to restrict gender-affirming care. These are true losses of civil rights. Trans people have been used and weaponized so much so that some trans people are fearful to leave their homes.

What does the UU Church of Canton do in response? We love the hell out of this world.

We keep our flags flying!

We live out our values that all people are worthy of dignity and respect. All people deserve love and liberation.

We keep love alive by caring for trans people.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Galasinski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. James Galasinski



FAITH ENGAGEMENT

Summer is here! I am looking forward to swimming, canoeing, camping, and vacation. All of these will help rejuvenate and soothe my spirit and mind. We all need to find ways to restore our bodies and souls.

To that end, our religious education program will be on hiatus from July 6 through August 3. We will return on August 10 with an experiential worship service and then faith filled fun days for the remainder of August.

We will also be hosting the Finding Awe and Wonder Summer Program on August 25-29 from 9:30 am till 2:30 pm each day for children ages 5-12. We will have special guests and field trips along with quiet time and free play. Please register [here](#). Registration will close on August 1.

May we all find ways to rejuvenate and rest during this summer. Blessed be.

Thank You!

Franny Frank, Miles Galasinski, Oskar Galasinski, Miriam Graham, Lillian Graham, Tim Savage and Jim Williams for being part of the RE Sunday worship service.

~ Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education



FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Our Covenant Journey

In his June message to the congregation, Rev. James described the concept of “covenant” and discussed the importance of these promises we make to each other about how we will be together.

You are going to be hearing that word “covenant” a lot over the next year as we journey together towards a congregation-wide covenant:

- **Rev. James’ June newsletter message** began the journey.
- During **our June 29th multigenerational service**, we continued that journey with a multigenerational service led by Rev. James and Carol Zimmerman focused on flourishing in covenant.
- On **August 3rd**, I will lead a **Coffee and Conversation service** as part of our summer worship series, in which we will ponder what it means to be in covenant together. In small groups, we will explore questions such as “What does beloved community look like?” to prepare us for developing our covenant together.
- In **September and October**, we will continue these preparatory conversations with a **variety of opportunities for you to talk together** about what a covenant might look like for our congregation.
- Following our bicentennial celebration and the holidays, we will pull together what we have learned through our conversations and, **in the new year, begin to build our congregation-wide covenant.**

As Rev. James said in his June message, “covenants are agreements we write ourselves”. Church Council will strive to provide opportunities for everyone to be part of this important creative process of writing a congregation-wide covenant.

I look forward to traveling with you on this journey.

Take care,



Cathy Crosby, Church Council President

Make Paper Cranes for International Day of Peace



On Sunday, September 21 we will be celebrating International Day of Peace during worship, by dedicating our new peace tree and with drumming and musical creativity. As part of this celebration, we would like to create 1000 paper cranes. Each Sunday from June 22 till September 21 there will be origami paper and instructions available in the social room. If each person makes a minimum of 3 - 5 cranes we will reach the 1000 goal!

RE Survey and Invitation to Serve

We are reimagining religious education for next year and different ways to serve our families. We need your help in determining and providing this new programming. Please take a moment to [complete a survey](#).





JOYS & SORROWS

- ★ Mande and Ira Thomas announced that they are expecting their first baby, to add even more love to our congregation!
- ★ With a heavy heart, we announce the passing of Becky Van de Water, who died on June 19, 2025 in Ogdensburg, NY. Becky was an unforgettable and colorful person who loved the UU Church of Canton for over 5 decades. She was seemingly always positive, optimistic, and generous. Her energy and enthusiasm will be missed. Becky's Memorial will be Saturday, October 11, 2025 at 10 AM.



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](#), or to add any birthday names that are missing, email caringcircle@uucantonny.org.

July Birthdays

Perry Frank	July 2
Steve Coffin	July 3
Bryan Thompson, Franny Frank, Mike Corse	July 4
Carol Zimmerman, Tim Opdyke	July 9
David Weissbard	July 10
Phil Collins	July 11
Henry Hebb	July 13
Kathy Wyckoff, Einar Kocho-Williams	July 15
Max Kocho-Williams	July 18
Finley Thomas	July 19
Lillian Graham	July 20
Kathleen O'Rourke	July 21
Rachel Graham	July 24
Emma Bentley-Hicks	July 27
David Doran	July 29

August Birthdays

Arliene Oey, Isabel Cleary	
Schelly, Thomas Cleary	
Schelly	August 5
Shaunie Cadieux	August 6
Nadia Marano, Walter Michalek, Sara Hutcheson	August 7
Elizabeth Simon	August 8
Sharon Tavernier, Judy Gibson	August 9
Peggy Lynn	August 10
Josiah Nelson	August 13
Bill Hull	August 14
Raymond Crouse	August 16
Ella Rubio	August 18
Jamey Merkel	August 19
Dan Duggan	August 21
Sam Joseph	August 23
Caleb Bentley-Hicks	August 24
Ethel Slocum	August 30
Barbie Miller, Teresa Veramendi	August 31

BICENTENNIAL EVENTS



Be on the lookout for upcoming events!

We are celebrating our 200th year as a beacon of liberal religion and a welcoming congregation in the North Country. Imagine what our congregation was doing this Summer 200 years ago! Surely the church news was a highly anticipated part of life along with vacations and memories with loved ones.

We will continue to include special Sunday service moments, guest speakers, and special events celebrating our history with other institutions such as St. Lawrence University, SUNY Canton and the St. Lawrence Center for History and Culture, when possible throughout the Summer. All events and Sunday services are open to the public. For detailed information please see the church website at www.uucantonny.org/our-bicentennial/.

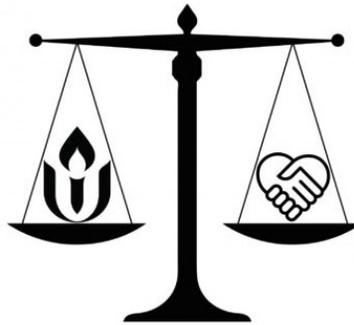
FROM YOUR SOCIAL ACTION TEAM:

Our Social Action Team has begun a new initiative: the Immigrant Resources Volunteer Network of St. Lawrence County. We'll be working in conjunction with Maria Garito, the Immigrant Resources Coordinator for Catholic Charities, as well as partnering with the Presbyterian Church of Potsdam, the North Country Neighbors for Civic Engagement, the Syracuse Immigrant and Refugee Defense Network, and the Office for New Americans. Maria is based in Watertown, but she has opened a branch office in Ogdensburg and will be splitting her time between the two counties. IRVN-SLC hopes to help Maria provide resources such as:

- Know Your Rights informational workshops
- Family Preparedness clinics
- Legal referrals
- Transportation (e.g. medical and immigration appointments, groceries)
- Reporting of roving traffic checkpoints

If you're interested in learning more about IRVN-SLC and helping immigrant communities, please send an email to Paul Siskind: paul@paulsiskind.com.

Social Justice Initiative 2026 Survey



Social justice is a value deeply woven into the fabric of Unitarian Universalism, and made explicit in our seven UU principles. At the UU Church of Canton, we put our principles and passions into action in many ways.

The [Social Action Committee](#) is seeking your help to identify ways we should best direct our efforts in the community during 2026. Please click below and complete our survey to help make your voices heard!

[Click here to take our survey.](#)

Please submit your response by Tuesday, July 15th. Thank you for your participation!

Frame Drumming Group at the UU



Come play the frame drum on Tuesdays, July 29th, August 26, and September 23, 2025, from 6:30 - 8:00 pm!

Frame drumming has a rich and ancient history, dating back to at least 2380 BCE in Mesopotamia. It is one of the oldest percussion instruments and has been used in music, ritual, and spiritual ceremonies across diverse cultures and regions. In recent times, frame drumming has experienced a modern revival, with musicians, healers, and educators exploring its diverse possibilities and uses.

Caron Collins, brings her playing and teaching experience with frame drums to our UU Church of Canton. She will lead a monthly frame drumming group where you can learn and enjoy playing Arabic drumming along with familiar chants. It's easy to learn and fun to play the techniques and rhythmic patterns of frame drumming. Bring your own frame drum or use one of Caron's Remo Fiberskyn Frame Drums. All ages and abilities are welcome! For more information, contact Caron at bandtchr1@hotmail.com.



Church and Community Program Back to School 2025 Donation

Our annual CCP Back to School 2025 donation is ELMER'S GLUE STICKS (only Elmer's). How easy is that! Due August 8th. Start now, though, by leaving them in the bag next to our CCP Food Donation Box.

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 pm 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.



FACING THE PRESENT WITH HEART

In these troubled times, full of anger, fear, and uncertainty, we are not alone. Please join us in Facing the Present with Heart, a listening meditation 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 will meet on the first Sunday of the month, July 6 and August 3, from 2 to 3:30 pm in Canton at the Unitarian Universalist Church; and on the third Thursday of the month, July 17 and August 21, from 6 to 7:30 pm in Potsdam at Trillium at the Presbyterian Church. There is no charge, and all are welcome.



GAME NIGHT

Join us on Friday, July 25 from 5 to 7 pm — 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

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.**

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
Betsy Kepes, Music Coordinator
The Revs. Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeriti
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