



Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton **NEWSLETTER**

September 2025

August 31, 10:30 am - The Fallacy of Makers vs.Takers

The Rev. James Galasinski

Right wing politicians have long implied that certain groups are lazy and dependent on the state. On the contrary, it could be said that the ultra rich are even more dependent on the state. Instead of being in an either/or, us/them mentality our world needs more unity. The collective, organized union of labor is needed now more than ever.

September 7, 10:30 am - Ingathering: Quenching the Spirit

The Rev. James Galasinski and Carol Zimmerman, DRE

In these tumultuous times we may feel dry and out of whack. In need of refreshment, this is no time to go it alone. The living water of spirit is found deep within and bubbles up in beloved community.

Please bring a small amount of water from somewhere sacred to you as we celebrate our multi-generational water ceremony and the start of our church year.

September 14, 10:30 am - What They Dreamed

The Revs. Wade Wheelock and Anne Marsh

As we look back in this bicentennial year, these lines from one of our hymns comes to mind: "What they dreamed be ours to do, hope their hopes and seal them true." The hopes and dreams of our congregation over its long history are interwoven with ours today, and can be a source of strength and inspiration.

Anne and Wade served as Co-Ministers of this congregation for 16 years, from 1993 until their retirement in 2009, when they were named Ministers Emeriti. They now live near family in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Anne will be with us in person, and Wade will join us by video.

September 21, 10:30 am - Being In Houses of Peace

The Rev. James Galasinski

We all grow up in homes and houses and move onto different abodes. Reconciling with our past takes more than forgiveness but also actual actions.

September 28, 10:30 am - Leaves of Identity

The Rev. James Galasinski

I once saw an oak tree in spring which still had its dried leaves on from the previous fall. As we grow and age our identities often change. Maybe we identified as athletes but are no longer physically able. It can be difficult to let our old leaves go when we change identities.



JAMES' JOURNAL



Late in the evening on a hot day in August I came to my office to open some windows to let the cooler night air in. I quickly noticed a bat got in between the window pane and the screen. I don't really like bats. A choir rehearsal was just letting out. Todd Moe was lingering around while his partner, Paul Siskind, was engaged in a discussion. "Todd, how are you with bats?", I asked.

When we got back to my office the bat was no longer there. I opened the shade all the way to see it had climbed higher to be in a darker area. That opening also revealed another bat. "It looks like you have a bat problem", Todd stated with a chuckle.

The Building and Grounds Committee and Rick who provides janitorial services are fully aware of the issue. In fact, the night before, 2 bats swooped down erratically towards my head enough to make me run away screaming. The more lights I turned off, the calmer they got. The more lights I turned on, the more they would attack me. Anyways, I asked Todd to assist me in the bat removal. I got a ladder to remove the screen and noticed a fly on the outside of the screen on one of the bats. As I unloosened the fasteners of the screen, I didn't want to get too close to the bat even though the screen was between us. As I shook the screen one bat stayed on it. It was obvious now, it was dead.

"Perhaps the other one went to pay its last respects," Todd surmised.

Well, after removing the wood framed screen painted blue gray to match the other trim of the building, the dead bat wouldn't let go, its claws in the tiny holes of the screen. Todd kills his own chickens. He is Minnesota tough. "Could you remove it?", I asked. First he tried tapping the bat with his shoe but it didn't work.

"I will wash my hands after doing this." He grabbed the fury brownish bat with his own bare hands and put it on the ground. As it lay there on our church lawn, in dusk's diminishing light, Todd asked if I would say a few words.

"Greater society may associate bats with hell, but as Universalists, even you, little bat, are going to heaven," I said in a somber and hopeful preacher's voice.

I also could have talked about how our little furry flyer took sanctuary in *our* sanctuary. Despite the darkness it flourished. Bats like darkness. They evolved to thrive in darkness. There is a lot of darkness in our world tonight. It seems like things are only getting darker and away from the light of reason, science, truth, and peace. We too can take sanctuary in *our* sanctuary, find a home here and learn to flourish in the darkness.

In peace,

The Rev. James Galasinski

FAITH ENGAGEMENT



I hope your summer was filled with sun, play and time with those you love. Mine sure was but it was also very different since I am no longer a caregiver for my parents. Things have changed.

Heraclitus once said, "Change is the only constant." Our religious education program is changing. Since the pandemic, numbers of children attending and adults serving in religious education have declined. We have experimented with different models of teaching like classes for all ages twice a month, combining a wider range of ages together and offering more fun days. We no longer provide separate classrooms of 5 different age groups each Sunday.

Family's needs and availability are different since COVID too. On average, they attend two Sundays per month. Some need Sunday for rest and rejuvenation after a hectic week. The pressure on parents has risen to new heights. Check out [this advisory report](#) from the Surgeon General.

We also have less folx serving as childcare attendants, teachers, assistants, and youth advisors. In 2020, we had 63 adults helping in religious education. Today, we have 28. This decline is impacting our ability to provide RE every Sunday.

To this end, we need your help in reimagining the future of our religious education program. The religious education committee and I have created a survey and invitation to serve. The survey has been available since June and we have only heard from 14 people. Please take a moment to complete the [survey](#). Your input will help determine how we move forward for this year.

Change is the only constant. When we come together and work through this change, stress and overwhelm are lessened. May we find connection through change. Blessed be.

~ Carol Zimmerman, DRE



FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Covenant Conversations

To empathize, listen, be kind, speak honestly, be present... What do these behaviors have in common? They were all emphasized by several members of our congregation during the first steps in our journey towards a congregation-wide behavioral covenant.

As our new church year begins, our covenant journey continues in September and October with small group discussions during which we will more deeply explore what we want in our behavioral covenant. You can expect an invitation from Church Council to join a small group conversation, and we hope that you will respond to the invitation with an enthusiastic "yes!"

We will strive to make these conversations accessible to all members by, for example, providing child care during some conversations and varying the days, times and locations. You can also expect refreshments!

So, keep your eyes open for your invitation. Church Council looks forward to talking with you!

Take care,



Cathy Crosby, Church Council President



JOYS & SORROWS

- ★ It is a joy to have Rev. Anne Marsh visiting us again, and sharing in our Bicentennial Celebrations.
- ★ With a heavy heart, we announce the passing of Joan Kepes, who died on August 20, 2025 in Vergennes, VT. Joan was a sharply intelligent, longtime member of our congregation, and founder of our Caring Circle. She cared deeply for our community and generously supported it for over 5 decades. She will be missed. A memorial service will be announced in the coming weeks.





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.

Tom Van de Water	Sep 1
Coral Pondysh	Sep 2
Jacky Ryan	Sep 3
Carol LaMarche	Sep 6
Kayla Bisnett, Ursula Jessmer	Sep 7
Tom Pynchon	Sep 8
Jim Williams	Sep 10
Keenan LeBoeuf-Davis, Sheila Cerwonka	Sep 14
Emma Hull, Zach Gagliardi	Sep 17
Colette LaMarche	Sep 18
Ruth Baltus, Ali Kocho-Williams	Sep 22
Sarah Rivers	Sep 24
Lorraine Olendzenski, Ken Hebb	Sep 25
Robin Collen	Sep 26



Social Hour Signups – Fall Season

Social Hour after Sunday services has become a cherished tradition—a time to connect, share stories, and spark new ideas over coffee and treats. It’s a moment of hospitality and community that helps carry us through the week.

As we enter the Fall season, we’re inviting signups for hosting Social Hour from September through December. Choose a week that works for you—whether you want to bring your favorite seasonal refreshments or simply lend a hand. If you’d prefer to co-host, we’ll pair you with someone who can help with the setup or snacks.

Need guidance? Our Kitchen Cabinet Team is happy to assist with supplies and instructions.

Sign up now, [HERE](#), and help us fill the calendar with warmth, connection, and delicious moments. You may also contact office@uucantonny.org, or add your name and dates to the sheet in the Social Room after service.

Greeter Signups

Part of the warmth and connection on Sundays, begins with the smiles and cheer of Greeters who provide a friendly welcome, an Order of Service, and information about the Worship Service, as well as Social Hour.

Sign up, [HERE](#), to help share a welcoming experience with visitors, friends, and members on Sundays. You may also contact office@uucantonny.org, or add your name and dates to the sheet in the Social Room after service.

Bicentennial Events, Activities and Celebrations



GET OUT YOUR CALENDARS AND PLANNERS!

We are approaching our official Bicentennial Date: November 17, 2025!

There are many opportunities for participating, contributing and interacting with each other and the broader community as we look ahead to the next three months of celebrations.

Please note these dates and check the website regularly for updates and more information: <https://www.uucantonny.org/our-bicentennial/>.

September 7 - Special Bicentennial Ingathering Service

September 13 & 14 - Special Bicentennial Pulpit Guest, Minister Emerita Rev. Anne Marsh

- Saturday, September 13, 10:00 AM: Walk with Rev. Anne on the Remington Trail. (Meet at the Trailhead near Maplewood.)
- Saturday, September 13, 3:00 - 5:00 PM: Informal gathering and conversation with Rev. Anne Marsh. Refreshments.
- Sunday, September 14, 10:30 AM: Sunday Service led by Rev. Anne Marsh

September 21 - International Day of Peace Events

- 10:30 AM Sunday Service
- 11:30 AM Dedication of Cherry Tree followed by Social Hour with Cranes and Haikus
- 1:00 PM Special Peace Day Music Event with Dr. Caron Collins

October 4 & 5 - Special Bicentennial Pulpit Guest, Rev. Jan Hutslar

- Walk, informal gathering and Sunday Service

October 11 - 1:00- 4:00PM - OPENING of the Special Exhibit of the History and Archives of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton featuring the "Rev. Dr. Payson Signature Quilt", Building Tours and Refreshments. A joint project with the St. Lawrence County Center for History and Culture.

October 24, 25 & 26 - New York State Convention of Universalists 200th Gathering. Hosted by the UU Church of Canton.

There will be many social activities, lectures, round tables, luncheons, dinners, music and celebrations. The Keynote speaker for the convention is the current UUA President Rev. Dr. Sophia Betancourt. More details are forthcoming.

VOLUNTEERS* ARE NEEDED FOR HOSTING, SETTING UP, HOSPITALITY AND MORE.

*Volunteers will be able to attend all events of the Convention with **Free Registration.**

November 8 & 9 - Special Bicentennial Pulpit Guest, Rev. Dr. John Buehrens, former UUA President and Universalist Historian

- Informal gatherings, special lecture Saturday night, and Sunday service

November 13-16 - BICENTENNIAL BIG BASH WEEK!! HOLD THESE DATES!!

- Welcome events, roundtable discussions, concerts, tours, presentations, lunches, dinners, CAKE!

For detailed information please see the church website at www.uucantonny.org/our-bicentennial/.



OWL Parent Orientation - September 10 at 7pm

For families who are interested in their child(ren) attending this year's Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education Program for 7th and 8th graders, we will be hosting a mandatory parent orientation. If you are interested, please RSVP with [Carol Zimmeman, DRE](#).

Religious Education Teacher Orientation - September 14 at Noon

If you are interested in serving as a religious education teacher, assistant or child care provider, please plan to join us for this orientation. We will be determining what our religious education program will look for this coming year. Lunch will be provided.

Jazz Night with the 5 Dots - September 19, 5-7pm, at Prentice Lane in Canton just off of Main Street



Come on out to Prentice Lane in Canton for a live Jazz performance by the 5 Dots! Bring a chair, try out some local eats, and enjoy an evening of music.

The Jazz and Coffee Nights project is made possible with funds from the Statewide Community Re grants Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by the St. Lawrence County Arts Council.

Board Games during Social Hour

Beginning Sunday, September 21 and then on the second Sunday of each month till May 2026 from noon till 2pm-ish, plan to join Carol Zimmerman, DRE during social hour in the Romer Room for board games. She will provide the games and instructions. Multiple games will be available to learn and play. All ages are welcome. Come for the fellowship and fun!

International Day of Peace Celebrations - September 21, 2025



Celebrate International Day of Peace with family-friendly music-making, drumming, dance, and art on Sunday, September 21st from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at UU Canton. Dr. Caron Collins, Professor Emerita of The Crane School of Music, will lead activities for all ages and abilities acquired from her experience with Musicians Without Borders. Registered participants will receive a frame drum to keep and take home (one per family). This event is free and open to all. For more information and registration, visit <https://dayofpeace.weebly.com> This project is made possible with funds from the Statewide Community Re grants Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and administered by the St. Lawrence County Arts Council.



Make Paper Cranes: 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 14 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!

Grief Gathering with Martha Gallagher and Colleen Corrigan:



On Saturday, September 27, 3 - 5 pm. Grief Gathering centers on collective and individual global grief and hope for humanity, as well as holding space for personal loss. Check the church website, [HERE](#), to register. A \$10 donation is recommended.

Third Thursday Soup

Third Thursday Soup is starting back up again! Come enjoy dinner with fellow UUs on Thursday, September 18 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 or bread for the meals.



Connections Fair - Sunday, September 28, 2025

You Are Invited! The Connections Fair is scheduled for Sunday, September 28th. Join us after the service 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. There will be tasty snacks and good conversation, too! Contact Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel at vicepresident@uucantonny.org, with questions.

- ★ Thank you to Jenn Whittaker for facilitating a Google workshop for committee chairs and team leads.

Listening Circles

Listening Circles meet once a month September thru June. Each month we explore a spiritual theme through readings, activities and pondering a question or two. Then, we get together and talk about our experiences. You can spend 15 minutes or 5 hours prior to the gathering exploring the reading material. 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 currently have 3 Listening Circles. If you are interested in joining the 2nd Thursday group at 7:00 pm, please contact Rev. James at minister@uucantonny.org. If this time doesn't for you and you would like to join one please reach out to Rev. James.

News from the Social Action Team - Get involved!



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. We will work with you to develop and implement your ideas. Please bring your ideas to the SA Team by e-mailing socialaction@uucantonny.org, or by attending our upcoming meeting. The SA Team generally meets on the second Tuesday of each month (but check the Church Calendar and newsletters to confirm).

We meet in person (in the Romer Room), with a hybrid/Zoom option available:

Social Action Meeting

Tuesday September 9, 7:00-8:30 pm

In the Romer Room, with Zoom option:

<https://zoom.us/j/91742806459?pwd=dHRhRmFCMnZHRDhRbVB3cktTZzZiUT09>

Meeting ID: 917 4280 6459

Passcode: 744583

Special guest: Crystal Collette, President of Planned Parenthood of the North Country

Medical Aid in Dying: Write to Governor Hochul!

The NYS Legislature passed the *Medical Aid in Dying Bill* in June; so now we need to encourage Governor Hochul to sign the bill. Even though there are “rules” about how long the Governor has to sign or veto each bill, in practice the rules are suspended and the Governor calls up bills in small groups through the end of the year. 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 11 states allow medical aid in dying to be available, and the issue is one of the priority issues for NYUU Justice.

<https://compassionandchoices.org/in-your-state/new-york/>

You can write or call Gov. Hochul’s office, with a short message explaining why you believe it’s important for her to sign the bill into law:

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224
518-474-8390

Along with writing or calling, you can add your name to an open letter to the Governor, joining hundreds of others across the state to encourage her to sign the bill into law:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSft-VHiyGb6a5rcg0d2vF4rxAcCU0eeuz5MkZX0mp0kVUJuTA/viewform>

Helping Immigrants and their Families

Our Social Action Team has teamed up with Catholic Charities and other local groups to bring important information and resources to immigrant families in the North Country. Catholic Charities has opened an Immigrant Resources office in Ogdensburg, affiliated with their office in Watertown and connected with service organizations in Syracuse. Our SA Team is building a volunteer network to serve as their “ears” (to let them know about local needs and issues), and to be their “boots on the ground” (to help with emergency situations when necessary). Along with our regular Social Action communications, we have a separate e-mail list for the *Immigrant Resources Volunteer Network*. If you’re interested in learning about how to help immigrant families in our community, please e-mail socialaction@uucantonny.org to sign up for the *IRVN-SLC* emails.

We’re starting to work on our next SJI!

The *Social Justice Initiative* (SJI) is a program of our church to raise awareness about important problems that we face in our North Country communities, with particular focus on the UU Principles of “justice, equity, and compassion in human relations” and “a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” Each SJI focuses on a specific social

justice issue, and brings together people from across our region to make connections, share information and resources, and develop strategies for addressing the issue. Our

three previous SJIs have focused on: Bullying and Harassment in Workplaces (2017); Incarceration and Imprisonment in the North Country (2019); and Cultivating Climate Justice (2023).

We received 54 responses to the survey about topics for our next SJI - thank you for your thoughtful input! Over the summer, we discussed the responses, and began fashioning a theme which ties together the helpful input from the surveys. We will announce the new SJI topic later this fall, and put together a committee to bring the SJI to life; look for more information in a few weeks.

Frame Drumming Group at the UU



Come play the frame drum on Tuesdays, September 30, October 28, November 25, and December 30, 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.

"Are You a Unitarian" The Massena Observer, June 16, 1960

are you a
UNITARIAN
without knowing it?

Do you believe man is not con-
demned by the doctrine of
"original sin," but is inherently
capable of improvement?

Do you believe the striving to
live nobly and constructively
more important than the ac-
cepting of religious creeds?

Do you believe in the brother-
hood of man, irrespective of
color, culture, or country?

Do you believe the primary re-
sponsibility for human progress
rests upon man?

Then you are
professing the
Unitarian belief.

Send 10c for booklet
"Introducing Unitarianism"
to: Fellowship Office,
American Unitarian Association
23 Beacon St., Boston 8, Mass.

Name

Address

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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, September 7, from 2 to 3:30 pm in Canton at the Unitarian Universalist Church; and on the third Thursday of the month, September 18, 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 Thursday, September 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 **Tuesday & Wednesday**.

Dan Burton, Congregational Administrator:

Available [by email](#), office hours **Tuesday & Thursday 9 am - 2 pm**, by appointment on **Monday & Wednesday**, and at **(315) 386-2498**.

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

3½ East Main Street Canton, New York 13617

The Reverend James Galasinski, Minister

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

Dan Burton, Congregational Administrator

Betsy Kepes, Music Coordinator

Open Church Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 9am-2pm

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