



## *Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton* **NEWSLETTER**

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**January 2026**

**January 4, 10:30 am - Musings on My Catholic Boyhood**

Doug Rubio

Although he has been a Unitarian Universalist for over 30 years, Doug Rubio grew up in the Roman Catholic church. In this service he will explore the positive things from that experience that he carries with him to this day.

Doug Rubio is a member of the Worship Committee. He has been attending our church for decades, and has held a number of leadership positions, including Church Council President. In his non-church life he is a retired professor of classical guitar at SUNY Potsdam, and still performs professionally.

**January 11, 10:30 am - Sermon by Pulpit Guest Speaker**

Rev. Dr. Shaun Whitehead

The Rev. Dr. Shaun Whitehead is the University Chaplain at St. Lawrence University. As a preacher, teacher, writer, and singer, Shaun focuses her work on breaking down barriers and building relationships that are inclusive, reconciling, and affirming.

**January 18, 10:30 am - The Downside of Dr. King's Day**

Rev. Dave Weissbard

There is certainly a positive dimension to the recognition of a great change-agent with a national holiday, but there is also evidence that such recognition often involves a "cleansing," the removal of some of their more controversial dimensions to make them more acceptable to the wider populace. On the day before the celebration of Martin's birthday, we will be considering what made him a more complex and important hero.

Dave Weissbard was born into the UU Church in Albany. He arrived in Canton in 1958, at the same time as Max Coots, and became active in this church. After he graduated from the SLU Theological School in 1965, he served as minister of the First Parish in Bedford, MA for 9 years, the Fairfax VA Unitarian Church for 5, and the UU Church in Rockford IL for 27. When he retired from full time ministry in 2006, he returned to Canton with his wife, Karen Wells and their daughter Hilary. This church played a significant role in that decision.

## **January 25, 10:30 am - God Beyond Belief: Happenings and Changes Along the Way**

Master Sean Boutin, North Country Tai Chi

In this sermon, Master Sean will share some interesting synchronicities that occurred during his personal transformation from a trained academic to becoming a Tai Chi Master. He will draw upon philosophy and the teachings of several world religions, which will relate to several stories experienced by Sean along his personal journey.

Sean Boutin is the Master to North Country Tai Chi LLC. Founded in 2013, Sean's practice encompasses a thriving international academy of 80+ students. Master Sean was certified by renowned Wushu Grandmaster Aiping Cheng after an intensive "live-in" mentorship.

### **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL BUDGET MEETING AND POTLUCK**

The Annual Congregational Budget Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 25**, directly after worship. All are welcome but only members may vote on the proposed 2026 budget. After the meeting, we will enjoy our all-church potluck, postponed from October, to which everyone is invited! Please bring dishes to share according to your last name:

A – G: Dessert

H – S: Main Dish/Side Dish

T – Z: Salad

And don't forget your potluck packs!



## James's Journal - Sabbatical



The root of the word sabbatical means "rest." One purpose is to cease regular ministry and engage in study, education, writing, meditation, and other forms of professional and religious growth. I will be taking a sabbatical in January and February of 2026. Part of it will be used to further explore the life of the Rev. Jeffrey Campbell, one of the first UU ministers of color who lived in Canton in the 1920s and 30s. I will continue to collaborate with a group of St. Lawrence University alumni and faculty on a book and I hope to contribute two chapters. I will also be attending

Institute for Learning Ministry 2026, a weeklong conference for UU ministers in New Mexico. I have chosen a track that will focus on preaching.

I will also be going to the pastoral respite program with my family at the Silver Bay YMCA at Lake George. As you may know, I am on the board of the New York Unitarian Universalist Justice (NYUUJ), a statewide legislative network. I will continue to work with them by celebrating the Medical Aid in Dying bill which the governor said she would sign, writing grants, choosing new topics, and working with the organization to make it more self-sustaining.

If there are any pastoral care concerns while I am away please reach out to the Pastoral Care Team lead for that week.

Thank you for the privilege to be able to take a sabbatical.

May we all find rest in the new year.

In peace,

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

***The Rev. James Galasinski***

### **Pastoral Care Team Lead Schedule January - February 2026**

January 1-10 - Sara Hutcheson

January 11-17 - Leo Burger

January 18-26 - Dave Nelson

January 25 - 31 - Albert Glover

February 1-7 - Sara Hutcheson

February 8-14 - Leo Burger

February 15-21 - Dave Nelson

February 22 - 28 - Pete Wychoff

## Faith Formation

Faith development comes in all different forms. As a pluralistic faith and one whose foundation is in building and maintaining relationships, we all have different needs and ways of learning and growing as a Unitarian Universalist.



Some of us need to fidget to be able to focus and learn. To support kids and adults of all ages with feeling grounded in the sanctuary, starting in mid-January, we have “Soul Work” materials available for anyone to use during worship. “Soul Work” is a term coined by a longtime UU educator, Joy Berry, who has extensively studied research on the effects of various kinds of handwork on our brain function and wellness. There will be coloring supplies, knitting and crocheting projects, needle work projects and more. If you are interested in being part of this project, please reach out to me via email at [dre@uucantonny.org](mailto:dre@uucantonny.org).

Starting in January, we will also be starting monthly Family Events. We will kick off with a Parent’s Night Out/Kid’s Night In event on Friday, January 9 from 5:30pm - 9:00pm. Look for details on the website and in the weekly enews.

May you find your way in growing and learning. Blessed be.

~ Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education





## President's Message – January 2026

### *Honoring Those Who Serve*

Our Bicentennial Celebration provided an opportunity for us to pause and honor all of those who have come before to build the beautiful structure and strong community that we enjoy today. However, you don't have to wait another 200 years to honor those who serve. Consider making a nomination for one or more of our three ways to honor service:

**Theo Dunn Award:** Each year, we bestow this award on an individual who has given many years of service to our church community. You will find more information about Theo and a list of previous awardees here. If you wish to nominate someone for this award, please contact me at [president@uucantonny.org](mailto:president@uucantonny.org).

**Rachel Somers Grant Award:** This award recognizes individuals, both within and outside our church community, who organize, lead and advocate for social action efforts in our community. You will find more information about this award, as well as a list of recipients, here. If you wish to nominate someone for this award, please contact Paul Siskind, Social Action Team lead, at [socialaction@uucantonny.org](mailto:socialaction@uucantonny.org).

**Social Action Shared Offerings (SASOs):** Through our periodic SASOs, we both honor and bring greater awareness to organizations, both locally and globally, who do notable work toward greater social justice. You will find more information about SASOs, as well as a list of organizations that have received SASOs, here. The Social Action Team is looking for new organizations and encourages you to submit an idea for a SASO by filling out the nomination form today.

Thanks!



*Cathy Crosby, Church Council President*



## 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](mailto:caringcircle@uucantonny.org).

Carol Pynchon	Jan 2
Ben Hunkins	Jan 4
Ellie Siegfried, Toby Sturges, Jean	
Williams-Bergen	Jan 6
Kathy Montan	Jan 9
Karen Bage	Jan 10
Aryn Rivers, Jeff Rousell	Jan 11
Paul Siskind, Zachary Barnes	Jan 13
Carol Opdyke, Louise Bixby, Aaron Rosales	Jan 18
Duncan Cutter	Jan 20
Jackson Zebede, Zoey Zebedee	Jan 22
Bobby Gordon	Jan 24
Diego Oey-Langen, Gwen Cunningham	Jan 25
Jennifer Whittaker, Rohan Narula	Jan 27
Anne Marsh	Jan 29

## Social Hour and Greeter Signups for 2026

Welcoming all who come on Sunday mornings and hosting social hour are responsibilities we all share. Church members and regularly attending friends are asked to take their turns with this important work of our church community.

To learn more, please visit:

<https://www.uucantonny.org/get-involved/service-volunteer-instructions/>.

Thank you for helping to make this a warm and welcoming congregation!

[2026 Social Hour Host Schedule](#)

[2026 Greeter Schedule](#)



### Third Thursday Soup

Third Thursday Soup is on! Come enjoy dinner with fellow UUs on Thursday, January 15 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](mailto:outreach@uucantonny.org) with questions or to sign up to make soup or bread for the meals.

### Church and Community Food Donations

For those looking support families and friends in need, you can help the Canton Church and Community Program by placing non-perishable food in the blue bin in the social room at church, which will be delivered to the food pantry, or by directly dropping off food donations at 30 Court Street M-F, 10 am to 4 pm, or by donating funds at the Canton [Church and Community Program website](#).



30 Court Street  
PO Box 55  
Canton, NY 13617

315-386-3534  
[director@ccpcanton.org](mailto:director@ccpcanton.org)



### GAME NIGHT

Join us on Thursday, January 8, at 5 pm! Bring your favorite game and friends or just come to join in! We try to meet monthly 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.

## Come Sing in the UU Choir for these Special Events!



Carol Strome and Paul Siskind invite new and returning singers 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 generally 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.

### **Martin Luther King Day service; Pulpit Guest, Rev. David Weissbard**

Schedule:

- Sunday 1/11            Rehearsal 9:00-10:10
- Sunday 1/18            Rehearsal 9:00-10:10; perform during the Service,  
10:30-11:00

Music from the Spiritual and Gospel traditions.

### **Pulpit Guest, Rev. Douglas McCusker**

Schedule:

- Sunday 2/15            Rehearsal 9:00-10:10
- Sunday 2/22            Rehearsal 9:00-10:10; perform during the Service,  
10:30-11:00

Music tba.

## **News from the Social Action Team - Get involved!**

### ***Soliciting nominations for upcoming SASOs (Social Action Shared Offerings)***

About once a month, our congregation donates our Sunday collection plate offerings to an organization outside of our Church, to support their social justice and humanitarian work. Our SASOs not only raise money for these organizations, they also raise awareness in our congregation about the issues that these groups are working on. SASOs can go to local, regional, national, or international organizations.

<https://www.uucantonny.org/social-justice/shared-offering/>

The SA Team is soliciting nominations from all congregants for our upcoming SASOs. The nomination process is informal; please fill out this form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc9vrpVbwRwTCX-rFrM2-Q5937m\\_CAwtSRlw\\_8YkNk3ZVmwvA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc9vrpVbwRwTCX-rFrM2-Q5937m_CAwtSRlw_8YkNk3ZVmwvA/viewform)

If you would like to discuss your ideas for upcoming SASOs with us, please e-mail: [socialaction@uucantonny.org](mailto:socialaction@uucantonny.org)



*Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton*  
**Social Justice Initiative**

*Promoting justice, equity, and compassion in human relations*

***Our next SJI (Social Justice Initiative)***

The Social Action Team is pleased to announce that ***Alyse Millikan*** has volunteered to be the Coordinator for our next Social Justice Initiative. Our next SJI will focus on the topic of ***Overcoming Isolation***, and will begin in Fall of 2026 and continue into Spring of 2027. We invite members of the congregation to be part of the planning team for this important event. If you're interested in being part of the planning team, please e-mail: [sjcoordinator@uucantonny.org](mailto:sjcoordinator@uucantonny.org).

***Supporting Food Pantries***

Given the ongoing uncertainty about federal funding for SNAP (food stamps), it's more important than ever that we consider supporting local food pantries. You can support food pantries by donating dry/canned food items and/or through monetary donations; check with each organization. In St. Lawrence County, there are a number of different food pantries; some of these are independent, while others are connected to various organizations/networks. Our congregation has a long-standing partnership with the Canton Church and Community Program:

<https://ccpcanton.org/>

There are also other food pantries which serve smaller, more isolated communities; here's a list of them:

[https://gardenshare.org/food-guide/?\\_type=food-pantry](https://gardenshare.org/food-guide/?_type=food-pantry)

Or, you can donate dry/canned goods simply by bringing them to the Church and placing them in the *Big Blue (Wooden) Box* that's located in the Social Room.



### ***The Gathering (Side With Love)***

The Gathering is a monthly virtual event from the UUA's Side With Love, designed to offer:

- Spiritual Grounding – Strengthen your heart and spirit for the work ahead.
- Political Analysis – Understand the threats to democracy and justice.
- Collective Action – Organize with others to block anti-democratic forces and build a just and loving world.

<https://sidewithlove.org/the-gathering>

Join them every Second Monday of the month at 8pm ET. Register by clicking:

[January 12: Economic Non-Cooperation](#)

### ***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](mailto:socialaction@uucantonny.org), or by attending our upcoming meeting (please let us know ahead of time if you want to add an item onto our agenda). 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 January 13, 7:00-8:30 pm**

In the Romer Room, with Zoom option:

<https://zoom.us/j/99736094441?pwd=3bpHAb6Rv1fCLVskAta2t5jxb5BtLJ.1>

Meeting ID: 997 3609 4441

Passcode: 450380

### **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](mailto:toddamoe@gmail.com).

### **History Circle**

History group meets Sunday, January 18 at 8 am in the Coots Library.

## Frame Drumming Invitation

You are invited to join our UU Monthly Frame Drumming Group! Our gatherings are on the last Tuesday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 pm in the Social Room. Drums are provided or bring your own. Each month is a new theme relating to this musical art. On Tuesday, January 27th we will be focusing on drumming as meditation. In Layne Redmond's book, "When the Drummers Were Women", she notes: Many are returning to the drum to recover an important spiritual connection that has been lost, a connection long buried but somehow instantly familiar. Come join us in exploring the meditative power of frame drumming. All are welcome! For more information, contact Caron Collins at [bandtchr1@hotmail.com](mailto:bandtchr1@hotmail.com).

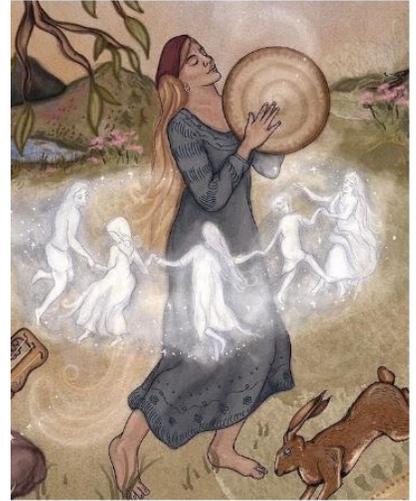
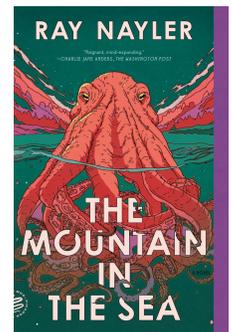


Image: from the cover art for the 2022 EP "Cirkeln" by Fia

## Science Book Club

January is a fiction month for the UU Science Book Club. On Thursday, January 14, the group will meet at 7:00 PM by Zoom to talk about *The Mountain in the Sea*. The author, Ray Naylor, presents a species of octopus that has developed its own language and culture. For more information, contact [bdgardam@icloud.com](mailto:bdgardam@icloud.com).



## Staff Schedules for the Church Year:

### **The Rev. James Galasinski:**

On sabbatical January and February

### **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

For online giving, please click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code below:



**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  
[www.uucantonny.org](http://www.uucantonny.org) [office@uucantonny.org](mailto:office@uucantonny.org) 315-386-2498