



Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton **NEWSLETTER**

April 2026

April 5, 10:30 am - Following the Earth into Easter

The Rev. James Galasinski

Easter is the most important day in Christianity. But this holy day also celebrates the resurrection (or return) of birds and bears. As the earth cycles into new life and blossoms into transformation, so must we.

April 12, 10:30 am - 20 Tips for Autism Awareness Month

The Rev. James Galasinski with special guests Zach Gagliardi, Conner Newcombe, and Don Mesibov

Did you know that some people with autism fear physical contact and eye contact feels unnatural and uncomfortable? Striving to be inclusive to all people is part of our identity as UUs. We can always be more welcoming and understanding to those who are neuro-divergent. Don Mesibov is the Founder/director of The Institute for Learning Centered Education Autism Initiative. Conner and Zach will share their experience of being autistic.

April 19, 10:30 am - Kneeling as an Art of Resilience

We will explore how the religious cultivation of wonder can be a source of resilience. As a means to this, we'll consider the art of Chiura Obata, his appreciation for nature, and his experience of being removed from his home to internment camps for Japanese Americans during the Second World War.

Bio:

Rev. Joseph Cleveland is a banjo player, peanut butter and jelly sandwich maker, and Doctor Who fanatic from Minnesota who's made Central New York his home. After a brief ministry in central Michigan, he served the UU Congregation of Saratoga Springs, NY, for more than ten years. Trained in both science and literature as well as religion, Rev. Joe is fascinated by how we find and create meaning in our lives through music, ritual, and story. Rev. Joe is the spouse of Kristin, a UU Membership Professional, and they live in Liverpool, NY.

April 26, 10:30 am - Communicating the Environment

Dan Berggren

Through songs, poems and essays, this service gives voice to our relationship with the earth and the "interdependent" web of all existence of which we are a part.

Dan Berggren is a tradition-based songsmith who writes with honesty, humor and a strong sense of place. His songs explore the many dimensions of home, hard-working folks, taking care of our planet and each other. A SUNY professor emeritus and founding member of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Chautauqua in Fredonia, Dan is a member of the UU Congregation of Saratoga Springs.

James's Journal Pumping the Phantom Breaks



Driverless semi trucks may be on many major U.S. roads as early as next year. I know human drivers get into plenty of accidents all the time and maybe driverless trucks are statistically safer, but who is responsible when a driverless truck causes an accident or kills someone? Sometimes automated driver's cameras and sensors pick up something that is not there and stop abruptly. This so-called "phantom braking" could easily cause an accident. Driverless trucks are supposed to save money on labor and thus make goods cheaper. But at what cost? What about the millions of truck driver job losses? What haunts me most is the thought of a runaway semi truck barreling down Route 11 causing damage and death.

I consider myself someone who embraces technology, but I am not an early adopter. Take for instance, AI tools that write essays or even songs. I have spent years, decades really, becoming a good writer and now I can just put in some prompts and *voilà*, a newsletter article. (This was not written by AI!) Maybe AI could write a good sermon. That would be ethically wrong to me, especially if you don't acknowledge it was written using AI. So, I am going to keep writing the sermon the old fashioned way!

War is almost always wrong and I am not going to defend Iran here. I think the current Iran war could have been avoided. A diplomatic solution could have saved billions of dollars and more importantly thousands of human lives. War was never declared by Congress. The war is unconstitutional and therefore illegal. Hardly anyone believes Iran was an imminent threat. Was the Trump administration emboldened to go to war with Iran because Israel asked us? Did Trump want to show the country he had the courage to do what no other president before him was willing to do? There seems to be no clear objective and no clear exit strategy. But what I find most morally hideous is the repugnant deaths of 150 to 170 people at the Shajareh Tayyebbeh girls' elementary school. Though an investigation is still pending, a U.S. missile strike most certainly did it. The primary cause is believed to be human use of outdated intelligence. At what level should human error become a war crime? AI is being used in war. What if AI is responsible for 150 children dying? What then?

Let's pump the phantom brakes.

In hope,

James Galasinski

The Rev. James Galasinski

Faith Formation

Spring is coming! For many, that means vacation time or Spring Break. Vacation can be defined as an extended period of leisure or recreation; a period during which activity is stopped for a time; or a period of suspension of work, study, or other activity, usually used for rest, recreation, or travel; recess or holiday. How do you define vacation?



Our religious education program will be taking a recess while the K-12 schools are on their spring break. There will be no religious education classes on Sunday, April 5 or April 12. When we return, families are invited to participate in the Earth Day Family Event on Friday, April 17. Learn more and please register [here](#). Religious education classes will resume on Sunday, April 19 with a Living Our Values Every Day class for all ages.

Even if you aren't taking a vacation during this time, try to find a way to rest and recreate. We all need to take time for these things! May it be so. Blessed be.

~ Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education



President's Message – April 2026
Join Us in the Work of Building Beloved Community



Anyone passing by the church on the morning of March 15 could hear our congregation's booming voices and stomping feet as we sang: *Ain't going to let transphobia turn me 'round!* This powerful moment expressed our commitment to gender inclusivity. Now it is time for us to do the walking and do the talking.

Many of our neighbors in the North Country do not welcome those among us who are trans and non-binary, and the current political climate has emboldened transphobic behaviors. We must be an oasis of welcome – but to be such an oasis requires work to educate ourselves.

That is why UU Canton will serve again this year as a satellite congregation for the annual **Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary** (BBCBB) conference: “where transgender people, allies, advocates, and accomplices can bravely (and with more safety than usual) explore, learn and grow, bear witness, and be witnessed.”

This year's conference will take place on **Saturday, April 18th**. See the conference announcement in this newsletter for more information.

Please mark your calendar and plan to join for some or all of the day's workshops and speakers!

Don't let transphobia turn you around. Instead, let it propel you forward to engage in the ongoing work of being gender inclusive.

I hope to see you there!

Take Care,

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.

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



Building Community Beyond the Binary Conference

Our Church is pleased to be a satellite host for this year's *Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary* Conference. The conference brings trans and nonbinary people, allies and community members together to learn

about issues of importance to the trans and nonbinary community, build allyship, and discuss how we can make our congregation more welcoming and supportive. Sessions will explore the issues from historical, scientific,

cultural, and artistic perspectives. It will be livestreamed at our Church, and provide a supportive and safe space for discussions. We encourage attendees to bring a brown-bag lunch so that we can spend lunch together in fellowship and meaningful conversation.

Saturday 4/18, 8:30am-4:30pm

Social Room

Registration for this event is recommended. Click [here](#) for event registration and workshop details or contact the Social Action Team at the email below.

If you would like to help with planning/organizing this event, please contact: socialaction@uucantonny.org.

Social Hour and Greeter Signups for 2026

[2026 Social Hour Host Schedule](#)

[2026 Greeter Schedule](#)

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!

Third Thursday Soup

Third Thursday Soup is on! Come enjoy dinner with fellow UUs on Thursday, April 16 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.

GAME NIGHT



Join us on Thursday, April 9, 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.

Earth Day Celebration, featuring Dan Berggren

Renowned singers/songwriter Dan Berggren will be leading a special Earth Day Celebration service. The Choir will be performing Dan’s *Power from Above*, a gospel-style homage to solar energy, as well as singing with him on 4 other songs.

Schedule:

- Sunday 4/12 Rehearsal 9:00-10:10
- Sunday 4/19 Rehearsal 9:00-10:10
- Sunday 4/26 Rehearsal 9:00-10:10; *perform during the Service, 10:30-11:30*

News from the Social Action Team - Get involved!

The Social Action Team thanks everyone for your generous support of our recent SASOs (Social Action Shared Offerings) for the Bittersweet-Milkweed Farm and the Adirondack Regional Immigration Collaborative’s Emergency Fund. Our next SASO will

be for Planned Parenthood of the North Country; please keep an eye out for announcements about the specific date.

Contact Legislators and the Governor to support the New York for All Act

The *New York for All Act* is a bill that's being considered by the NYS Legislature which would provide immigrant communities significant protections from indiscriminate detentions and deportations by ICE. Most importantly, it would:

- Bar ICE from entering sensitive, non-public areas of state agencies such as schools, hospitals, DMV, social services, etc.
- Bar state agencies from colluding with ICE on immigration enforcement.
- Bar law enforcement from wearing masks.
- Require that people in ICE custody be given notice of their rights before interrogation.
- Rescind and ban all 287(g) agreements between ICE and local law enforcement agencies.

The Legislature is negotiating with the Governor's office about the final details of the bill. At this point, it looks like there are enough votes to pass the bill. However, we need to encourage the Leadership of the Assembly and the Senate to bring the bill to the floor as soon as the budget is finished; and we also need to encourage Governor Hochul to sign the bill intact, without weakening it with amendments.

The coalition of groups working to pass the bill are asking *everyone* to call and/or email the Leadership and the Governor *this week*, as a concerted push for the bill. You can use the following simple script (or adapt as you wish):

"Hi, my name is _____, and I live in the town of _____. I'm calling because our County Sheriff has signed a 287(g) Agreement to collaborate with ICE, and the residents of our county are very concerned about ICE coming in and destroying our communities. I urge the

[Speaker/Majority Leader] to bring the New York for All Act for a vote.

[Governor] to sign the bill without weakening it with amendments.

Please support the bill in its entirety, because all NY citizens need the broad protections of the bill. Thank you."

Here's the contact info:

Governor Kathy Hochul

(518) 474-8390, (518) 402-2292

legislative.secretary@exec.ny.gov , Governor.Hochul@exec.ny.gov

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins

(518) 455-2585

scousins@nysenate.gov

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie

If you get an answering machine, just leave a message; no need to ask for a callback. (At this stage, they're just counting the number of calls/emails they receive.)

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 (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 April 14, 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

Seeking nominations for the Rachel Somers Grant Social Action Award

Rachel was a member of our church, a teacher, and activist who lived in Canton from 1977 until her death in 1990. She was involved in a variety of community groups, including the La Leche League, Friends of Choice, the Preschool Playgroup, our Social Action Committee, Work on Waste (an anti-incinerator, pro-recycling group), and a support group for women with cancer. Rachel believed grassroots movements were an effective means of achieving change.

Each year, our Church recognizes individuals in our community who exemplify the characteristics Rachel Somers Grant showed in her life:

- 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

The Social Action Team invites you to submit nominations by Monday, April 6th; nominators should explain how the nominee exemplifies these characteristics, and be sent to: socialaction@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

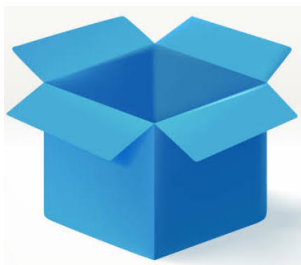
organizations/networks. Our congregation has a long-standing partnership with the Canton Church and Community Program:

<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

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.



30 Court Street
PO Box 55
Canton, NY 13617

315-386-3534
director@ccpcanton.org

Shamanic Circle Will Meet Bi-Weekly on Mondays at 9:30 am in 2026

The next meetings will be April 13 and 27 with Debra Mitchell leading. Please bring a rattle, eye covering, drum (if you have one) and journal for writing. You are invited to bring a sacred or special object for the altar, too. For more information, email Debra: dmitchell317@twcny.rr.com.



UUs and D&D

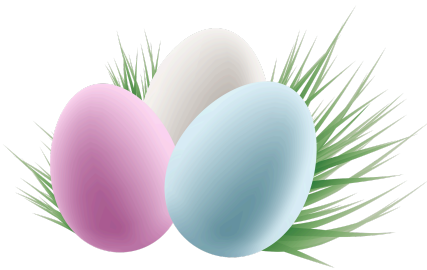
Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) has seen a resurgence in recent years due to appearances in pop culture and the pandemic. But is it possible that Dungeons & Dragons can be more than just a game? Join us Saturdays at 4 pm in the Social Room for an afternoon of D&D. All ages are welcome, though younger brave hearts should bring an adult mentor. Let us know if you'll join us by emailing toddamoe@gmail.com.

Earth Day Drumming and Dancing

Come join the UU Frame Drumming Group in celebration of Earth Day and Beltane on **Tuesday, April 28th from 6:30 to 8:00 pm in the Social Hall**. Our April 26th frame drum gathering combines Earth Day (April 22) and Beltane (May 1) to celebrate our connection to nature and care of our planet. Participants can choose to drum, sing, and/or dance to our Earth-centered music, chants, and hymns. You will receive your choice of either a complimentary Beltane Flower Crown to wear OR a Norway Spruce tree to plant at your home! Dancers who join our group will receive a free dance skirt, courtesy of Joya Blondel. Come celebrate our "Blue Boat Home". All ages and abilities are welcome. Drums provided or bring your own. For more information, contact Caron Collins at bandtchr1@hotmail.com.



Decorate Easter Eggs



Join us on Saturday, April 4 anytime from 2-5pm to decorate eggs for Easter. All supplies will be provided. All ages are welcome to participate. A \$5 donation is suggested.

Passover Seder

Members and friends of the congregation are invited to participate in a Passover Seder at the church on Thursday April 2nd from 5:30-7:00pm. The Passover Seder is a ritual gathering and feast which involves a retelling of the story of the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt, followed by a meal. The Rev. David Weissbard will officiate this joyful and educational event for all ages. This event is funded by the World Spiritual Practices grant with the goal of offering the congregation the experience of a Jewish celebration. If you didn't register by the deadline but would still like to attend, please email Carol Zimmerman, DRE at dre@uucantonny.org.

Earth Day Family Event



For families with children, plan to join us on Friday, April 17 from 5:30-8:00pm. Climate justice and building relationships are core values we hold. We will begin with dinner and then engage in a

special earth day project. No need to bring anything. Please register [here](#) so we can plan for dinner.

Science Book Club

On Thursday, April 16, at 7:00 PM, our Science Book Club will discuss John Valliant's *Fire Weather: A True Story from a Hotter World*. The book details the [2016 wildfire](#) when 88,000 residents had to evacuate Ft. McMurray in Alberta. For the Zoom link, contact bdgardam@icloud.com.

Festival of Sacred Music and Text

Please join the Potsdam Interfaith Community (PIC) for the annual Festival of Sacred Music and Text at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (21 Castle Drive, Potsdam) on Sunday, April 19th at 3:00 p.m. Our own Doug Rubio will perform! Following the program there will be refreshments and conversation. Please contact Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel, our PIC liaison, with questions.

Coffee House Concert

Please come to the church to enjoy Berggren's rich, thoughtful and sometimes funny music at a 7:00pm coffeehouse on Saturday, April 25th. Admission is free but donations of money or non-perishable food will be donated to the Church and Community Food Pantry.

Dan Berggren grew up in the Adirondacks and graduated from St. Lawrence University. Now a professor emeritus of SUNY Fredonia, Berggren has released twelve albums and travels nationally and internationally to give concerts.

On Sunday, April 26th Berggren will be the guest speaker in our pulpit and our choir will sing some of his songs including the internationally-known *Power from Above*, a funny "gospel" song about solar power.

We Are Hiring!

The UU Church of Canton is seeking a Congregational Administrator. The part-time position offers a flexible schedule and the opportunity to work with a wonderful staff and a dynamic congregation. Click [here](#) to learn more about the position. If you know of someone who might be interested, please share this job posting with them.

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–Wednesday** and by appointment on **Tuesday & Wednesday**.

Congregational Administrator:

Dan Burton has resigned. We are currently searching for a new Congregational Administrator. If you know someone who would be interested, please send them to [seeking-congregational-administrator-3-20-26](#)

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 office@uucantonny.org 315-386-2498