

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

121 North Pleasant Street, P.O. Box 502, Amherst Massachusetts 01004

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Important Information

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therevfrado@aol.com Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday,
10:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M.. Day off Friday, Other times by
Appointment

CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR;

Judy Mitrolka

413-253-2848 (office) or office@uusocietyamherst.org
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 10:a.m.-2:00 P.M.

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NEWSLETTER

Copy Editor: Janis Gray, 413-259-1584

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Deadline for submissions: 15th of each month.

Please sign submissions, so we may reach you if we have questions. Submit entries one of two ways:

1. Email it to jsgray@crocker.com.
2. Mail it to 219 Wendell Road, Shutesbury MA 01072.

Please limit entries to 500 words (100 for the "For Your Information" section). Submissions may be edited to save space or to maintain a consistent style. Thank you!

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Schedule of Services

Sunday, March 5, 10:30 A.M. – *Human Diversity: Supporting Transgender Youth*

The Rev. Cynthia A Frado preaching

The recent Presidential reversal on transgender bathroom rights on a national level has set into motion a dangerous precedent for increased bullying and severe emotional trauma for those young people who are struggling to claim their identity as human beings.

Today's service will take us on a deeper journey through the First Principle of our Unitarian Universalist faith. This is an important Sunday to be together in the meetinghouse!

Sunday, March 12, 10:30 A.M. – *Sowing Seeds of Love*

The Reverend Cynthia A. Frado, Rebecca Fricke, DRE, Brenda Miller, Director of Music and friends

This Sunday will be a "break out" service, where we will begin in the Sanctuary, break out into four different groups (music, service project, craft, and discussion) and then regather in the Sanctuary for a final reflection and closing ritual.

Sunday, March 19, 10:30 A.M. – *Choir Sunday: Music of Josquin des Prez!*

Each year, it is the tradition of the UUSA to present what we call Choir Sunday, a Sunday service focusing on music. This year we will be presenting music by Josquin des Prez, a Flemish-French composer of the Renaissance Period.

Join us to hear an *Ave Maria*, *Agnus Dei*, and instrumental selections with our very own talented choir and guests Peter Blanchette, archguitarist, and Diana Brewer. Justina Golden and Jim Mead, vocal soloists. Come rock the Renaissance with us!! Invite your friends and family.

Today is our Dedicated Offering Sunday.

Sunday, March 26, 10:30 A.M. – *Being Mortal: A Deeper Perspective*

The Rev. Cynthia A. Frado preaching

As a prelude to our book discussion which will follow the service, and to the three Wednesday evening information sessions beginning March 29 (see page 8), this morning's sermon will begin to explore some of the truths that our mortality offers us for deeper consideration and reflection. Come and be empowered for your journey!

Most sermons and readings are posted on our website, www.uusocietyamherst.org. Click on the "SERMON ARCHIVE" button on the right side of the home page, and then on the title of the sermon you wish to read.

Special Collection of Hygiene Products for Craig's Doors

Sunday, March 12 before or during service

On March 12 we will be having our second annual "Break-Out" worship service. People will be asked to choose how they would like to worship for the morning — music, art, social action or conversation. One of the options will be to organize and bag **hygiene products** for the guests at Craig's Doors. The RE Ministry is asking everyone to please consider donating toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, combs, and shampoo for this Social Action Sunday. Look for a box labeled Hygiene Donations in the lobby of the UUSA. Thank you!

Musings from the Interim Minister's Inkwell

Turning the Corner on Winter and the Interim Process

You can feel the shift beginning. There are noticeable changes around us as the winter season begins its slow shift toward spring. For some of us it cannot happen fast enough, and for the lovers of snow and cold, the lingering weeks of winter are to be savored and enjoyed. Whatever camp you happen to be in, the reality is that

the seasons **will** change in their own time regardless of our persistent or latent desires. I suppose one could say the same for the transition between the interim period and settled ministry. It is coming, and the methodical and important process has begun, ready or not.

What does this look like and what does it mean? **STAY TUNED!** You will be getting lots of information as it becomes available from the Board of Trustees. Choosing a Search Committee will include input from the entire congregation. Once that important group of people is secured, they will have a retreat with our UUA Transitions Representative and begin the very detailed work of preparing for the search process. It is a long, slow, and comprehensive process that has been tweaked considerably over the years, and is constantly being updated according to changing times. Once the Search Committee has gathered needed information from the Society, it goes into “sequestered” mode, where they work within a code of confidentiality as they review the work and backgrounds of potential candidates and then begin the pre-candidating interviews to choose the minister they would like to present to the congregation. For the potential candidates, it is the longest interview process, **EVER**; however, it is meant to inspire the best possible match . . . and that is what this whole endeavor is all about . . . finding the best settled minister for UUSA.

While the wheels are turning and the work towards that final goal is in gear, life and ministry at UUSA continues. In the interim period, we are all engaged in the ministry of the Society. Worship, RE, pastoral care, committee work, education, social outreach all continue to hum along, and will continue to do so until a new settled minister is put in place. With that in mind, please know that I feel very privileged to serve as your interim minister, and that along with the rest of the staff will do all that I can to help keep this wonderful community healthy and strong until the day comes to “pass the pulpit and corner office” to your next minister.

In good faith, peace, and warmth . . .

Rev. Cindy

Dedicated Offerings

Dedicated Offerings provide a way for our Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst community to recognize and financially support worthy organizations engaged in projects that reflect our guiding Unitarian-Universalist principles.

On one Sunday every month (except for June, July, and August), we schedule a Dedicated Offering (DO), recognizing that our Society needs our support on the other Sundays of the month. Dedicated Offerings are suggested by both individuals and committees of the Society, and the program is managed by the Minister and the Dedicated Offering Committee.

A form for you to suggest a Dedicated Offering recipient is available in the office. Our goal is to cover a wide range of areas of need in our area and in the larger world, including these categories: local, regional, national, international, environmental, medical, educational, animal rights, arts/music/culture, and different ages and genders.

Thank you for showing your support for the Dedicated Offering program, not only with your contributions to the DO recipients themselves, but also with your contributions to the Society on other Sundays when our budget counts on those receipts. Remember that no one is required to contribute to our Dedicated Offering recipients – this is a voluntary initiative.

The amount collected on February 19 for **ARISE for Social Justice** was not available at press time.

Our Dedicated Offering on March 19 will be for the **Kestrel Land Trust**. Beginning as an all-volunteer land conservation organization in Amherst in 1970, The Kestrel Trust expanded in the 1990s to include a nine-town region. Then in 2011, The Kestrel Trust merged with the Valley Land Fund to serve 19 towns surrounding Northampton and Amherst. Throughout its history, the Kestrel Land Trust has had a mission of conserving and caring for land as well as nurturing a love of the land. Together the merged organizations have conserved more than 20,000 acres of farmland, river land, woodland, and other wild land in our valley. Their aim is to continue and even accelerate the pace of this work and expand their programs, which are more critical than ever in addressing problems posed by the global climate crisis.

As we enjoy the diverse land that surrounds us, with its rich wildlife habitats, we are no doubt benefitting from the Kestrel’s efforts to protect our ecosystem now and make it sustainable in the future. On March 19, as we

anticipate the coming of spring, we have a wonderful opportunity to learn more about stewardship of the land, get involved, and thank the Kestrel for all that they do. It will be our honor to welcome **Kristin DeBoer**, Executive Director of the Kestrel Land Trust and member of the UUSA, to tell us more about the important work our gifts will support. You are also encouraged to read about the many remarkable accomplishments and goals of the Kestrel Land Trust and the Valley Land Fund at: <http://www.kestreltrust.org/>

Thank you from Climate Action Now

Our UU Society recently received a card from the Steering Committee of Climate Action Now. It said:

Best wishes to all of you for a beautiful, peaceful, safe and Joyful New Year

Dear congregants and staff of the UUSA,

We would like to express our deep appreciation for all the support we have received from you this year. We feel lucky to be able to hold some of our gatherings and events in your beautiful, easeful space.

We are also extremely grateful for the donation we received from the congregation earlier this year [2016]. We have so much work to do, but the kind of support we have received from you makes it all so much lighter.

Special Congregational Meeting

There will be a Special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, March 12, after the service to amend the UUSA Bylaws to create a larger Ministerial Search committee with four elected and three appointed members.

A section of the current bylaws reads:

- A. Search Committee. The Ministerial Search Committee shall consist of five Active Members elected at a Special Meeting called for this purpose. The Leadership Development Committee shall present a slate of at least eight candidates, and additional nominations from the floor shall be in order. Voting shall be by secret ballot.

The amended section of the bylaws would read:

- A. Search Committee. The Search Committee for a Minister shall be composed of seven Active Members of our Congregation. The Congregation will nominate people to serve on the Committee. The Board will present a slate of candidates composed of Members who have been nominated, consulted, and who are willing to serve.

The Congregation will vote by secret ballot for Search Committee members at a congregational meeting; nominations will also be accepted from the floor during that meeting. The top four vote-getters on the slate will serve on the Committee. The three additional Search Committee members will be people from the slate or nominated from the floor who are appointed by the Board of Trustees to ensure demographic balance on the Search Committee.

A second Special Congregational Meeting *may* be held on May 21 to elect members of the Search Committee.

Membership



Carolyn Thomas

We are delighted to report that **Carolyn Thomas**, a longtime UU who recently moved to Amherst with husband **John Strickland**, signed our venerable membership book on January 22. Welcome, Carolyn!

Becoming an official member of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst represents a serious step and significant commitment – both to this congregation and to the larger voice of Unitarian Universalism in the world. Membership is not only about what we, as individuals, will get from this UU Society, but what we might have to offer as well. Many of us have found our lives more fulfilled by the act of giving of ourselves to this beloved community. If you are considering membership, we encourage you to talk to the volunteers at the Welcome Table in the Social Hall!

Benefits of membership: **Active Members** are 18 years of age or older, and are expected to participate in one or more activities of our UU Society and/or make recorded annual financial contributions. They may vote, hold office in the Society, and be an agent of the Society. Active Members may vote in any congregational meeting of the Society, provided that they have been a member of a Unitarian Universalist church, society, or

fellowship for a total of 60 consecutive days immediately preceding the meeting, including at least 30 days of membership in the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst.

Voting Youth Members are from 16 to 18 years of age and are full-time students. Such members may participate in all activities of the Society, may vote on all matters except those prohibited by law, may serve on the Board of Trustees, but are not expected to make a financial commitment to the Society.

Nonvoting Youth Members are full-time students ages 13-15 who may participate in the activities of the Society but who may not vote nor be elected to an office in the Society.

Small Group Ministry

Small Group Opportunities! The Small Group Ministry Program currently has openings in existing groups, and we are always interested in forming new ones. Perhaps you have an idea for a specific kind of group. There was talk recently of an intergenerational group, for example. We welcome your ideas and participation! For more information contact **Anne Louise White** (413-367- 9761, annelouise@crocker.com) or **Mary Wyse** (413-549-5406), mshwyse2@gmail.com).

Stewardship

Abraham Lincoln once said, “I care not for a man’s religion whose dog and cat are not the better for it.”

Not everyone is in the same place on the “pets are people, too” continuum. But we can all grasp the wisdom behind Lincoln’s good-natured humor. After all, one of our Society’s founding principles, and a key goal of our spiritual practice, is to support the interdependent web of all existence. We strive to think beyond our own self-interests and to find meaning — and take satisfaction — in giving generously of ourselves for the good of us all.

As we approach our own season of giving here at the UUSA, we want to encourage each friend and member to think about why it is we give. We give to support the work of the Society that supports us all — including the weakest among us; we give to help pay fair wages to our staff; we give to sustain the building that provides the space for our service and our worship.

We hope you will keep these things in mind as you contemplate your pledge for the upcoming year.

— The Stewardship/Canvass Committee

Fundraising



UUSA Home Stay Program Did you know that we have a Home Stay program at the UUSA? Each fall and spring members of our congregation open their homes to visitors bringing their sons and daughters to UMass or one of the colleges for the first time, or visiting them on parents’ weekend, or attending graduation. This is a service to families seeking a place to stay on very busy weekends, and it’s a fundraiser for our Society. It is also interesting and fun, according to those who have hosted!

If you have one or more rooms that would be suitable for guests, perhaps you could be one of our hosts. Please contact **Mary Wyse** (413-549-5406) or mshwyse2@gmail.com to learn more.

SAVE THE DATE – Saturday, May 6 Talent and Treasures Auction, 6:00 – 8:30 P.M.! Our spring “friendraising” and fundraising evening will be a blast!

DONATE: Your talents and treasures (big ticket items and little gems): Host a dinner or a games night, offer chainsaw work, contribute a gift basket, or donate a weekend at your vacation home – imagine the possibilities! *Use the donation form that was attached to the email which brought you this newsletter*, or pick one up in the UUSA entry lobby.

COME: Bring your friends and neighbors for delectable drinks, hors d’oeuvres and desserts. Bid in the silent auction, then join in the live auction fun.

VOLUNTEER: Help us with big and little tasks (there’s a job for everyone).

CONTACT: For more info, contact **Carol Johnson** at our auction email: UUSAuction@gmail.com

COUNCIL OF CHAIRS GATHERING: March 19 at noon

Following the momentum of our fall meeting, we are inviting the Chairs of each committee to come together for a mid-year check-in, and to start preparing our Society Calendar for the 2017-2018 year. If you cannot attend, please send someone from your committee in your stead. Please come to Classroom A at 12 noon on Sunday the 19th.

Social Events

UUSA Intergenerational Contradance Fellowship Event

Saturday, April 8, 7:00-9:00 P.M.

Willie Eaton Social Hall

Music by **Ron, Louise and Anna Grosslein**

Calling by **Anne Louise White**

No experience necessary

\$5 donation per adult (kids and youth free) at the door to cover expenses

FUN FOR ALL!

Our March Social Supper will be held on Saturday, March 18, at 6:00 P.M. the home of **Carolyn and Kyle Cave**, 18 Kennedy Drive, Hadley. Please call them at 413-549-0321 to let them know what you are bringing to this potluck meal and to get directions if needed. In keeping with our Eating Locally project, we encourage the use of local foods at our gatherings. Although it's by no means a requirement, consider using even one local ingredient in whatever dish you prepare. And, if you bring a dish containing shell-fish or nuts, please label your dish. Thanks, and we look forward to seeing you at the supper!

The Women's Lunch Group meets every other Thursday at noon for spirited conversation over local, inexpensive cuisine. Our March 9 luncheon will be at Sunset Grill & Pizza, 150 Fearing Street, Amherst. We welcome every woman, whether she is new to our Society or a longer-time member or friend. It is not necessary to RSVP, but if you have questions or want to be on the e-notification list, contact **Janis Gray** (filling in for coordinator **Sophie Rogers**) at jsgray@crocker.com or 413-259-1584.

The Men's Breakfast Group meets on Wednesdays at 7:00 A.M. at Kelly's Restaurant (314 College Street, Amherst). Contact **Michael Sussman** at msussma@music.umass.edu for details.

Green Sanctuary

Look for the Green Sanctuary Committee's Action Table in the Social Hall on the second Sunday of every month. We will provide information on an environmental issue and a way for members of the congregation to contact legislators or other key people. We want to make it easy for you to take action on critical issues. Please visit us!

Our February GSC Action Table did not happen, because the service was cancelled that day due to snow! We will have one on March 12 instead. We all need to participate and communicate with our elected officials. Thanks for all that you do! We hope to see many of you. but if you do not come to the service March 12, here are our suggestions for useful actions to take at the state and national level:

1. If you would like to be alerted about actions at the state level that Climate Action Now suggests, sign up to be on their "rapid response team." We will have sign-up sheets at the monthly Action table.
2. Please write to U.S. Senators and Representatives, asking them to speak for the rights of all of us, and to protect our planet. We will have printed postcards for you to address and sign at the Action Table. If you miss us that day, you could send one yourself from home. Here's a suggestion:

Dear (U.S. Senator, Representative),

I am writing you to today to ask you to fight against the appointments and threats before Congress today; the issues of threats to immigrants, Muslims, people of color, and the LGBTQ community; threats to the preservation of our environment and the looming issues of climate change; and the undermining of rights of every citizen to health care and reproductive rights. I am opposed to any new pipelines and loosening of rules about fossil fuel drilling and fracking. Climate change is not a belief. It is a fact. Take steps now to fight with all you have to preserve our environment and protect human rights, to ensure a better future for all Americans and people of the world.

Many thanks,

(Signature)

(Address)



Religious Education Ministry

Today I woke up thinking about how our lives are a series of math problems. I'm not talking just how to save and spend dollars and cents, but something along the lines of greater than and less than and placing concepts on continuums like most important to least. We compare, rate and rank and weigh things from the time we are born. For example, I felt tired last week, but this week I feel really tired. I thought I loved *X* flavor ice cream, but *Y* flavor ice cream is amazing! I have three hours to work, what should I do first? What can I put off? And yet through all of our computations, no matter what we are sizing up or comparing, we know we need to maintain a positive attitude — not just because it increases our life expectancies, but because it is more fun! I will conclude by saying that the UUs have always been good at problem solving together (I'm digressing from the math concept), and for the past two months I have seen and heard about UUs gathering all around the country to problem solve and work towards a greater good. A friend of mine recently said, "We need to concentrate on the 'net gain,' otherwise it can get depressing." Perhaps we need a course in spiritual accounting to help us move into the future?

Speaking of fun: The RE program is going strong! The preschoolers have been working on self portraits and getting to know the routines and each other. The elementary program has been thinking about worship spaces and the process of worship, and the Coming of Age youth just received letters from their parents about leaving home. Youth Group did a great job volunteering for Not Bread Alone, and this month they will organize the programming for the rest of the year.

Want to share a talent and or your time? Think about volunteering for the RE Program!

YoUUs,

Rebecca Fricke, DRE

Adult Reprogramming

UU Book Discussion — *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande

Sunday, March 26

12:00 –1:15 P.M.

Take this opportunity to build community through conversation and reflection about this important book on aging, end of life issues and health. **Tom Fricke** and **Susan Rice** will lead the book discussion following a sermon given by The Rev. Frado on a similar topic. Copies of *Being Mortal* are available at the UUSA. Contact Judy in the UUSA office or Susan (SCarewRice@gmail.com) if you are interested in borrowing a book. Please RSVP to Judy in the UUSA office or to Rebecca (FrickeDRE@gmail.com) so we know how many people to expect.

THOUGHTFUL ENDINGS: A Three-part Series About End-of-Life Issues The Rev. Cynthia A. Frado and guests

It's "the talk" that no one wants to have, but everyone needs to have to make our journey's end more meaningful and less chaotic. Please join us for three informational sessions that might help bring some clarity and personal peace, and begin the discussion for yourself and/or family members. WILLIE EATON SOCIAL HALL

- Session I: March 29, 2017 6:00-7:00 P.M. Elder care options — stay home, nursing home, live with adult children/agencies and available services.
- Session II: April 5, 2017 6:00-7:00 P.M. Elder legal questions, health care proxy, protecting assets, wills, health benefits, trusts, and other financial concerns.
- Session III: April 12, 2017 6:00-7:00 P.M. Sorting through the personal and spiritual details, end-of-life requests, obituaries, funeral/burial desires, journals, storytelling, how you want to be remembered, what information to begin gathering together for family, doctors, lawyers, clergy.

Social Action



"Just One Thing" On March 12, a collection for Amherst Survival Center will take place. During these cold days, as people choose between food and heat, the demand for food at the Survival Center is great. The "Just One Thing" basket will be placed in the foyer for donations. Items specifically needed at that time will be described in the Bulletin two weeks before. For information contact Mary Beth Seminario, mbsem@comcast.net.

Our Caring Ministries



Our Caring Circle, minister, and Pastoral Care Team are all available to provide attention and support to anyone who is sad, ill, grieving, or otherwise having difficulty coping.

Our Caring Circle coordinators are **Carolyn Cave** and **Clare Bertrand**. Please contact one of them or your own Caring Person for rides, food, and simple needs. Caring Circle members are **Clare Bertrand, Linda Callahan, Carolyn Cave, Sue Kelly, Karen Mack, Martha Nelson, Susan Rice, Chas Stevenson, Lynn Sussman** and **Gordon Wyse**.

Our Pastoral Care coordinator is **Mary Wyse** while **Pete Rogers** is away. Other members are **The Reverend Elizabeth Alcaide, The Reverend Cindy Frado, Bo Mack, Fran Plumer** and **Libby Stanforth**. Please contact one of them for more complex or personal needs.

Meetinghouse Committee

Save the date: Saturday, April 22 for a UUSA workday. We will wash and paint walls that need it and clean up outside.

If you notice something that needs to be done, please tell me!

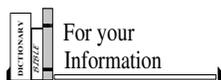
Anne Perkins

Meetinghouse Committee Chair

Interdenominational Affairs



ION Corner At the February 1 meeting of the Interfaith Opportunities Network (ION), a speaker talked about the important issue of sanctuary. Margaret Sawyer is donating her time with the Pioneer Valley Worker's Center's "Sanctuary in the Streets," which mobilizes to support immigrant rights throughout Western Mass. They are also part of the sanctuary network through the Massachusetts Communities Action Network. Ms. Sawyer also spoke about the Interfaith Sanctuary and Solidarity Network (ISSN) of Western Massachusetts. ISSN is an interfaith and multicultural network of congregations which stand together for immigrant rights and against hate. By working together, different congregations can take responsibility for different tasks needed to help immigrants so that the undertaking is shared. Ms. Sayer is willing to meet with groups to explain the role and responsibilities of a sanctuary congregation.



For your
Information

BuildYoga Katie Shults instructs Body Friendly Yoga in a welcoming and supportive class environment. She rents the UUSA social hall, thereby supporting our Society. Classes meet on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00-10:30 a.m. and Thursday from 5:30-7:00 p.m. A special class, Yoga for Stiff People, six week series, will be held Tuesday, March 14 - April 18, 5:30-7:00 p.m. at a cost of \$120. Feel free to talk to Margaret Manson, Sandy Sladen or Liz Bertone-Johnson for personal reviews of these classes. (Website: build-yoga.com)