

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

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Important Information

STREET ADDRESS: 121 North Pleasant Street,
Amherst, MA 01002

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 502, Amherst, MA
01004-0502

INTERIM MINISTER:

The Rev. Cynthia Frado

413-253-2848 (office) or 508-320-5771 (cell) or
therevfrado@aol.com Contact her for an 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.

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Rebecca Fricke 413-687-8722 or rebfricke@gmail.com

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: Brenda Miller

413-253-7855 or bmmiller.music@gmail.com

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

President: Bo Mack 413-253-3530

rmack@umass.edu

Vice President: Karen Fisk 413-210-0960

karenmargaretfisk@gmail.com

Clerk: Lynne Latham 508-308-5877

latham.lynne.m@gmail.com

Treasurer: Elliott Kelly 413-559-9937

spahrkellys@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER

Copy Editor: Janis Gray, 413-259-1584

Production Editor: John Foster, 413-253-2632

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, February 4, 10:30 A.M. – *Our UU Theological Tapestry: The Pagan Wheel of the Year*

The Reverend Cynthia A. Frado preaching

Pagan rituals have had a significant impact upon Unitarian Universalists whose cosmologies are nature based. Inspired by Celtic traditions, the turning of the seasonal wheel reflects both the outer and inner life of humanity. Today we mark that point between winter solstice and spring equinox, called Imbolc, which celebrates the growing seed. This is the perfect time of year to consider what you want to make manifest in your own life.

Sunday, February 11, 10:30 A.M. – *Love Is . . .*

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. The Co-Executive Directors of Craig’s Doors will be joining us for this special service.

Today is our Dedicated Offering Sunday

Sunday, February 18, 10:30 A.M. – *Women and Politics*

Ellen Story

Our former (retired) State Representative, Ellen Story (D-Amherst), returns to our pulpit as our guest speaker this morning.

Sunday, February 28, 10:30 A.M. – *Finding Healing in the Broken Places*

The Reverend Cynthia A. Frado preaching

As human beings we have a propensity towards perfection and wholeness. Life, however, is hardly perfect or continuously whole. How do we find peace and contentment living with such ambiguity? Can we find beauty in imperfection and healing in the broken places? An interesting Sunday to be in the meetinghouse!

Many 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.

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. 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. Recipients for FY18 have been chosen. Forms for suggesting recipients for next year are available in the Meetinghouse office.

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 December Dedicated Offering raised \$1,113.94 for **The Sanctuary Program at First Congregational Church of Amherst.** (You’ll find the church’s response later in this column.)

The January Dedicated Offering raised \$1,001.00 for **Amherst Community Connections.**

February’s Dedicated Offering on February 11 (a week earlier than our usual DO Sunday) will be for **Cool-Cap**, a charitable organization founded by Roger Bird, husband of UUSA member **Rachel Peterson.**

Roger has spent the last 35 years as a banker and agricultural lender, the last 20 of which have been on interna-

tional development projects around the world. His work in places like Bosnia, Zimbabwe, and Kenya involved finding solutions for the myriad issues that smallholder farmers face. His frustration about why smallholders could not get access to credit finally worked itself into a vision about how they *could* — he calls it the concept, “Pay-As-You-Harvest.” And he is putting it to practice.

His non-profit is called CoolCap because “Cool” stands for “patient” (we can wait for the harvest), and “Cap” stands for “capital” (we provide the financing the farmer needs). His goal, and the mission of CoolCap, is to “put the right tools in the hands of sub-Saharan smallholder farmers,” and the method is to provide small-scale machinery, requiring no complex support and training, via loans that— when repaid in less than a year — supply the funds for the next round of farmers. Over the last three months he has already started getting feed pulverizers and solar powered water pumps to farmers in Kenya.

We have received a letter of thanks for our December Dedicated Offering.

Dear Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst:

This letter acknowledges your \$1,113.94 special Sanctuary Program dedicated offering to First Congregational Church in Amherst for our Immigrant Sanctuary Fund.

Your gift is deeply appreciated and helps make it possible for us to provided needed support for Sanctuary expenses and for Lucio Perez and his family while he is in sanctuary with us.

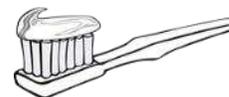
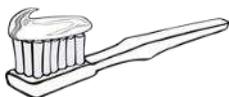
Thank you very much for your generous gift.

Sincerely,

Doris D. Peterson, Treasurer

**UUSA Personal Care Collection
for
Craig’s Doors
January 28 – February 11**

From **January 28– February 11** the UUSA will be collecting travel sized personal care items for Craig’s Doors, Amherst’s Homeless Shelter. Donations will be accepted before and after the services and during the week between 10-2 in the office. The collection will culminate with a whole-congregation **Valentine’s Service on February 11.**



Suggested Donations:

Soap

Shampoo

Toothpaste

Toothbrushes

Tissue Packets

Deodorants

Small combs

Feminine Hygiene Products

New socks

For more information please contact:

Rebecca Fricke, DRE, 413-687-8722, frickedre@gmail.com

The Rev. Cindy Frado, 413-253-2848, TheRevFrado@aol.com

Ministerial Search Committee

Your Search Committee has begun the new year with a burst of energy! On January 2, we gained access to a list of 19 ministerial candidates interested in the UUSA. We spent the first week of January reading the Ministerial Records and perusing the packets of those candidates to learn more about their preaching styles, their backgrounds, their influences, and their experience. We have generated a “short list” of interviewees, conducted Skype interviews, and winnowed the list further to an “even shorter list” of pre-candidates.

We’ve been very pleased to see that the ministers with whom we have spoken feel that our Congregational Record and our Packet convey the UUSA’s warmth and community spirit. Candidates appear to see us as a healthy congregation with great potential for future growth and development. These impressions are encouraging!

As we’ve said before, confidentiality becomes extremely important at this stage of the search process. As we narrow the field of candidates and check primary and secondary references, we will be taking special care to maintain the confidentiality of the ministers in search. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we hunker down to get this work done.

Our next step will be to choose three-four candidates to preach at “neutral pulpits” – churches where neither we nor they are known – and spend from Friday through Sunday of each neutral pulpit weekend in interviews and casual conversations over meals. You won’t be seeing much of us for a while, but rest assured that we are on schedule, we are collaborating well as a Search Committee, and we are feeling very optimistic about our work.

We thank you for your love and support along this exciting journey. Onward!

Ministerial Search Committee:

Carolyn Cave (chair), Jenn Chylack, Lisa Cyr, Mary Herman, Anne Perkins, Steve Rice

The Birth of Unitarianism

The six-part documentary series from the UUA, *Long Strange Trip*, continues on February 18 with Part 2, “The Birth of Unitarianism.” Our audience for Part 1 in January was enthusiastic about wanting to see the next installment! Come join us at noon downstairs in Classroom A for a viewing and refreshments.

Part 2 opens just before the Protestant Reformation begins, when rapid religious and cultural change will unfold in a very short span of time. In what ways were our religious forebears responding to rapid change? In what ways were they creating it?

Part 2 is 1 hour, 3 minutes long. Afterward you are welcome to stay, if you can, for a discussion using a study guide by the UUA.



Canvass

Greetings from the Canvass Committee

As most of you know, we at the UUSA have climbed our share of mountains and met our share of challenges in recent years.

So what is in store for the UUSA in 2018? More lofty goals and epochal events!

You are probably aware of our ongoing search for the next settled minister of the UUSA. In addition, the UUSA is looking to move forward on a number of important issues facing our Society.

Key to those efforts is the UUSA Canvass, which is where friends and members pledge their financial support to the work of our Society. It is these pledges that provide approximately two-thirds of our operating budget.

In the coming weeks, you will be hearing more about what we’re hoping to achieve at the UUSA and how you can help us achieve success. Keep your eyes and ears open for communications from the Canvass Committee as we begin our campaign, which is set to kick off at the beginning of March.

Thank you!

Your Canvass Committee

Jeanne Ballantine, Elliott Kelly, Karen Mack, Rachel Peterson, Peter Lacey

The Social Suppers Committee

is looking for UUSA members and friends to host a Social Supper in their home on a Saturday evening in March, or April. We will be happy to provide assistance of any kind to help to provide an enjoyable evening of delicious food and good company. Call **Carol Rothery** at 413-253-3125 or carolrothery@comcast.net if you would like to take part in these lovely home gatherings.

Social Events

February Social Supper Please join us for our monthly Social Supper on Saturday, February 17 at 6:00 P.M. at the home of **Sue and Elliot Kelly**, 142 Columbia Drive in Amherst. Another opportunity to socialize with your fellow UU'ers in a relaxed and congenial atmosphere. Since this is a "Pot Luck" affair, please call Sue or Elliott at 413-559-9934 to ask what you can bring: appetizer, main dish, salad, or appetizer. Coffee and tea will be provided. Although its by no means a requirement, consider using one local ingredient in whatever dish you prepare. And if you bring a dish containing shellfish, please label your dish, as we have some folks with severe allergies to shellfish.

To find the Kellys' house, drive south on S. Pleasant Street, which becomes West Street, until you reach the small bridge and traffic light at the juncture of West Street and East Hadley Road. Turn right onto East Hadley Road. Almost immediately on the right, you will see Columbia Drive. Turn onto Columbia Drive until you see their house three-quarters of a mile on the left side of the road at #42. We hope to see you there!

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.

Women's Lunch The Women's Lunch Group meets every other Thursday for conversation and local, inexpensive cuisine. The next luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, February 8 at Johnny's Tavern, 30 Boltwood Walk, Amherst. We welcome every woman, whether new to our Society or a longer-time member or friend. It is not necessary to RSVP, but if you have questions, need help finding a ride, or want to be on the e-notification list, contact **Janis Gray** at 413-259-1584 or jgray@crocker.com.

Do you paint? If so, come to **UUSA's Open Studio** in the Social Hall. Paint from 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M., then a bag lunch and friendly critique from 12:00 - 1:00 P.M. Fridays February 9 and 23, March 9 and 23.

- Email SusannePersonette@gmail.com to say you are coming or with questions.
- Bring **\$5 cash** to help the cost of heating the space.
- Bring **plastic shower curtain(s)** to protect floors and tables.
- Bring **your own paints**, etc.

February 10th at the UUSA

RE Pizza Party

5-6 PM

Come eat pizza and play games.

Donations towards the pizza gladly accepted.



Later on February 10 . . .

UUSA Contra Dance

6-8 PM

Fun for all ages— Bring family and friends!

No Experience Necessary

\$5/adult and kids are free

Music by the Grosslein Family

Calling by Anne Louise White



Religious Education Ministry

Did you know that our largest RE group consists of middle and high schoolers? The Our Whole Lives (OWL) program for 9th and 10th graders and parents is halfway through the 14 scheduled meetings. OWL facilitators (**Karen Fisk** and **Mary Cornell**) are enjoying the process. At the same time I am meeting with the youth parents and we are having some wonderful conversations about parenting and our own experiences. In January the regular youth group (9th-12th) met to discuss **Glen Bertrand's** sermon on sanctuary. February will hopefully be a time to give back to the community and plans are under way.

On the other end of the age spectrum, I am happy to report that **Jacy Armenti** and **Augusta Fricke** are busy with a few toddlers, preschoolers and a baby. Jacy Armenti's preschool program is essential for helping the children become good UUs. Jacy and the children practice circle time, listening, sharing, caring, and singing! Exactly what the adults practice in worship in larger chairs in the sanctuary!

YoUUs,
Rebecca Fricke,
Director of Religious Education

Mindfulness Group UUSA member **Jessica Murphy** offers a mindfulness group to our UUSA congregation. She would like to experiment with hosting the group on Wednesday evenings (instead of Tuesdays). This is February 14 and 28, 7:00 - 8:00 P.M. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jess at 413-575-1963 or jessica.mindfulness@gmail.com for details. If you were planning on coming, but Wednesdays are never good for you, please let her know.



On Sunday, December 31, The Sunday Services Committee presented a service at UUSA entitled “Blessings.” Emily Dickinson’s “A Little East of Jordan” was read by **Lois Kackley**, and music was provided by **Carolyn Holstein** and **Jason Threlfall**. The two-part “sermon” included “Three Questions” by Leo Tolstoy, read by **Bob Romer**, **Mary Latham**, and **Kristen Roeder**. “Blessings” by the Rev. Dan Schatz, Minister at the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester, PA was presented by **Carol Rothery** and is reprinted below.

BLESSINGS

What does it mean to bless one another? Is it an invitation to the divine? Is it an expression of good wishes? Is a blessing something we say or something we do—a religious ritual or a way of living our lives?

For years, blessings baffled me, and I think other people could tell.

Two decades ago I was one of an interfaith group of summer chaplain interns at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center. One of the things I appreciated about our group was the effort everyone made to respect each other’s diverse religious paths — even my Unitarian Universalist humanism, about which I was a lot more defensive and absolutist at 23 than I am today. Then, one day, it happened.

I sneezed.

Sister Antonia, the Franciscan nun in our group, automatically said, “Bless you!” and then she blanched. “Oh,” she said, “I mean, if that’s okay.” I told her I was happy to receive blessings in whatever theology anybody wanted to give them, and in that moment I made a commitment to myself to relax more about religious language. By the end of that summer, I had learned to pray with patients in the words they needed to hear. Appreciating the act of blessing became part of my growth in religion and ministry.

It’s such a simple thing to say. “Bless you.” But I used to think that outside of a sneeze, it was something only a priest might do, bestowing some kind of divine authority and intention that I didn’t believe worked that way. Saying “Bless you” felt very awkward, until I came to learn how important the act of blessing can be, and that there doesn’t have to be anything magical about it.

A blessing is food for the soul—a way of nurturing one another that goes beyond platitudes and becomes the way that we choose to live. We might not always use the word, but when we reach toward one another with an offering of care, support, or simply the presence of our hearts, we become blessings in each other’s lives.

When we are grieving, when we are going through a difficult time, or wrestling with a hard decision, the blessings we find in community and the blessings we give to one another, bring us courage and give us hope, keeping us grounded in reality and in the goodness of life.

When we are filled with joy, there are few blessings greater than to be part of a community in which we can share the fullness of our hearts, knowing that there are people who care, and who walk with us in celebration as much as in sorrow.

We are thirsty for blessings, and so I ask of you this: Bless one another. Whatever form your blessing might take, whether you use the word or simply bless with your actions, be a blessing to the people around you.

Listen to them. Let your love and compassion come through. Stand with one another, a presence without judgment, a comfort and an encouragement. You don’t need to solve all of the problems or make everything better; that is probably beyond your power. Just bless one another. And mean it.

This is the simplest way that I know to live a spirit-filled life, and you may never know the impact of your simple blessing—your words, your patience, your moment of remembering and caring for another soul. Bless one another.

~ ~ ~

At the end of Rev. Schatz’s sermon, **Carol** added that there are no words to describe the many acts of kindness, understanding, and encouragement she has received from members of this Amherst Unitarian community since the recent loss of her husband, **Paul**. “I am surrounded by love.”

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

Our Pastoral Care Team coordinators are **Pete Rogers** and **Mary Wyse**. Other members are **The Reverend Elizabeth Alciade**, **Charlie Atwood**, **The Reverend Cindy Frado**, **Rob Fuderich**, **Bo Mack**, **Fran Plumer**, and **Libby Walton-Stanforth**. Please contact one of them for your more complex or personal needs.

Sending loving thoughts to **Charlie and Judy Atwood, John and Susan Barbaro, Jan Cole-Stryker, Vicki Hinson-Smith, Millis Mershon, Breda Miller, Mary Wyse**, and to all those who are suffering from the flu!

We will miss longtime friend and member of the choir, **Cynthia Brown**, who died December 2 at the age of 90. She will be remembered for her sense of humor and for the music which she composed and which we will continue to enjoy.

With love from our Caring Circle, Pastoral Care Team, Small Groups and Minister.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will meet on Monday, February 26, at 7:15 P.M. at the Meetinghouse, in Judy's office.

Social Action



Just One Thing On Sunday, February 11, travel-sized personal care items for Craig's Doors will be collected as part of the UUSA two-week collection, January 28 - February 11. Suggested donations: soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, tissue packets, deodorants, small combs, feminine hygiene products and new socks. For information contact **Rebecca Fricke**, DRE, 413-687-8722, rebfricke@gmail.com; **The Rev. Cindy Frado**, 413-253-2848, TheRevFrado@aol.com.

Sanctuary — Food for Lucio Perez Our UU Society is one of 12 faith congregations that are providing evening meals for Lucio Perez. The week of Monday January 8 - through Friday January 12, **Lois Kackley, Mary Beth Seminario, Richard and Susan Roznoy, Carolyn Holstein, Carolyn Thomas and Gabriela Horvay** prepared and delivered a variety of foods including soups, appetizers, stews, salads, desserts and drinks. Most were able to meet Lucio and sometimes his family, who join him on Monday and Thursday. They all were very glad to help and felt humbled. If Lucio is still at First Church, the next time the UU will be responsible for providing meals is the week of April 9. For information contact **Mary Beth Seminario**, 413-253-0894, mbsem@comcast.net as our UU representative to the Interfaith Solidarity & Sanctuary Amherst group.

Not Bread Alone On Saturday, December 30, UUs were a welcoming crowd on a frigid day. **Gabriela Horvay, Mary Latham, Becky and Hal Lockwood, Becky Sheridan, Mary Beth Seminario, Kim Salditt-Poulin, Sue Kelly and Jazzy-Hannon-Moonstone** provided a scrumptious lunch. Among the food served were a huge colorful salad, a pea soup, a vegetarian frittata and one with ham, and apple crisp. Some of us also helped organize produce donated by Whole Foods, which was distributed to guests after lunch. THANK YOU!! Please join us on Saturday, March 31, when we will be called on to cook another great meal. (Any time there are five Saturdays in the month we're responsible for that day.) If you can help please contact **Mary Beth Seminario**, 413-253-0894, mbsem@comcast.net

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!

The Green Sanctuary Committee will meet on Thursday, February 22, 7:00 P.M. at the home of Gordon and Mary Wyse, 219 Lincoln Ave., Amherst.

ION CORNER

We had an exciting speaker at our January ION (Interfaith Opportunities Network) meeting. The Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas (Margaret), Missioner for Creation Care, Episcopal Diocese of Western Mass., spoke about the importance of working to save the earth. Her focus is to inform, support and bring together people concerning environmental damage and solutions. She talked about how in the past people from different faiths and groups worked together toward a common goal. She would like that to happen now with climate change issues.

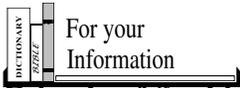
After her talk, ION members decided to assemble a list of "leadership/contact people" from our respective congregations on environmental, racial, social justice, etc. committees with the goal of connecting these people.

UUSA COMMUNITY BREAKFAST NEEDS YOU!

The UUSA has been providing volunteers for the free Community Breakfast in the Willie Eaton Social Hall every Wednesday for three years. We serve 80-120 guests a freshly cooked hot meal of eggs, home fries, sausages, pastries, cereal, toast, juice and coffee or tea – all provided by Amherst’s Craig’s Doors. Our breakfast is important as the Amherst Survival Center, which is open other days, is closed on Wednesday.

Our breakfast team works closely with Craig’s Doors, which helps people find ways to become empowered and improve the quality of their lives through the creation of safe, respectful shelter and housing.

We regularly experience a shortage of volunteers both in the summer and the church year. Dishwashers and cleanup crew are especially difficult positions to fill, but many other jobs are also available. Contact **Clare Bertrand** at clarebertrand@gmail.com. She will send you a weekly email reminder with a link where you can see what positions are available for each week. For questions or more information contact Clare, or **Sophie Rogers**.



Friends of Sophie and Pete Rogers seek apartment (You may already have met Maryclaire; she attended our service on January 28 — *Ed.*). They write: “Youthful senior-age couple with UU belief system has sold antique farmhouse in Beverly, and moved to Amherst/Northampton area. We hope to find a 2 bedroom apartment rental which allows cats. Ready for our Place-in-Space immediately — we are staying at Ho-Jo’s on Rt. 9 with our cats. Call Maryclaire at 978-473-0506.”