

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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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 con-
sistent style. Thank you!

Printed on recycled paper



Schedule of Services

Sunday, September 2, 10:30 A.M. – *Change of Heart*
Mary Herman, UUA Affiliate Minister

Change. The word is enough to make some people shudder in anticipation – like waiting for the other shoe to drop. For others, it’s the juice that involves greater awareness and commitment to what truly matters. Whether or not we choose it, change comes upon us and by choosing to see more, to see differently, to try on new perspectives, it becomes more possible to love, to help, and to create justice. Today we’ll explore what can cause a change of heart and a new way of seeing the world.

Sunday, September 9, 10:30 A.M. – *Ingathering and Water Sharing Ritual*
Rev. Steve

As we return to our full schedule of fellowship and worship after a summer of reduced church engagement for many, we will use the sharing of water as a symbol of commitment to our Society and to the world.

Sunday, September 16, 10:30 A.M. – *Freedom of the Pulpit*
Rev. Steve

Unitarian Universalism upholds “Freedom” as a basic value. How do our ministers and we manifest that rather abstract concept when we are challenged over deeply held principles?

Sunday, September 23, 10:30 A.M. – *Freedom of the Pew*
Rev. Steve

If there is a Unitarian Universalist “Freedom of the Pulpit” is there not also a concomitant “Freedom of the Pew?”

Sunday, September 30, 10:30 A.M. – *Title and Topic to be Announced by the Sunday Services Committee*
Today is our Dedicated Offering Sunday.

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.

From the Minister

ALONG THE WAY

Dear Friends of UUSA,

It is with joy and enthusiasm that I greet you as we begin our year together. As well as walking with you, week in and week out, through all of the experiences of church life, I will be especially working with you as you re-engage in the search for your next settled minister.

It would be normal and expected if you felt disappointed at not being able to find a minister this year. Some very fine churches and very fine ministers are sometimes not able to secure a match in a particular year, only to find themselves happily settled in the next. This happens for a certain number of our churches in every settlement cycle and almost always proves to be a temporary setback. You should not think there is “something wrong” with UUSA or that your search process was flawed. With high hopes and due diligence, your interim minister and MSC led you through a lot of work in the last two years: meetings, information gathering, filling out a survey, developing a congregational record and so forth; however, this time around it was not to be for you. As you may imagine, churches (and ministers) that experience such an incomplete search are always a bit down. The challenge is then to re-engage the work with renewed energy; I must tell you that I have already experienced that energy in just the few weeks I have been working with UUSA. There is much ahead of us this year and good things are already happening. I look forward to sharing this time with you.

Yours in Unitarian Universalism,

Rev. Steve Cook

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.

The Dedicated Offering's recipient on September 30 will be the Picture Book Theatre, a local literacy project for children, founded by Therese Brady Donohue 10 years ago. Originally this puppet theatre brought to life the children's books written by Eric Carle (e.g. *The Hungry Caterpillar*) but recently it has branched out to other local authors. This year the featured book will be *The Littlest Matryoshka* (Russian nested dolls) by Corinne Demas, with scenery and puppets by Donohue and adapted from the illustrations of Kathryn Brown. The Dedicated Offering will be used to provide two tickets and a book to about 20 children and a parent who otherwise would not be able to attend the puppet show.

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.

From the President

Dear friends,

From the President is a feature that is being reinstated this year. I hope you will read the entire letter, longer than it might be in the future, especially because this is a particularly important and busy year.

We are so fortunate to move into our year with great energy and enthusiasm for all we have the potential for achieving—a strong interim process, a search for a settled minister, another year of being here for one another in beloved community.

INTERIM PROCESS

The Rev. Stephen Cook joined us as our interim minister August 1. He will be with us through June. Together with the Board, Transition Team, and Staff, Rev. Steve will lead us through an interim process that includes, but is not limited to:

- Claiming and honoring the congregation's past, healing its griefs and conflicts
- Illuminating the congregations unique identity: its strengths, its needs, and its challenges
- Clarifying the multiple dimensions of leadership, both ordained and lay, and navigating the shifts in leadership that accompany times of transition
- Renewing connections with available resources within and beyond the UUA
- **Enabling the congregation to renew its vision, strengthen its stewardship, prepare for new professional leadership, and engage its future with anticipation and zest.**

(From *In the Interim: Strategies for Interim Ministers and Congregations*, edited by Barbara Child and Keith Kron, Skinner House Books)

Rev. Steve will let us all know his hours. He is working with the Transition Team, made up of **Carolyn Cave, Lisa Cyr, Steve Rice, Polly Peterson, Mary Herman, and Jenn Chylack**. We are grateful for their service in helping to implement the interim process for our congregation.

SEARCH FOR A NEW SETTLED MINISTER

Meantime, our Ministerial Search Team has begun the process of search, meeting together with Unitarian Universalist Association Consultant Debby Bergh, at the end of August. Debby met also with the Board. You will hear regularly from the Ministerial Search Team and the Board on the process.

The Ministerial Search Team is **Louise Grosslein** and **Jess Murphy**, co-chairs; **Janis Gray**, **Kiana Diggs**, **Sue Kelly**, **Charlie Atwood**, and **Carol Johnson**. We are grateful to this team for taking on the important and large task of ministerial search.

OUR BELOVED COMMUNITY

And, as ever and always (thank goodness), we are here for one another in beloved community—especially in a time of change, of transition. To me, what beloved community means is that we gather with best intentions, prepared to support one another in times of joy and of sorrow, open to the stories we share, welcoming of a variety of approaches to how and why we believe what we believe, and knowing above all that we have the ability to make life a heaven on earth by our actions, by our relationships with one another and our world. To me, beloved community means being in right relationship with each other.

At the Board meeting in June, we talked about what “right relationship” means. Again to me, right relationship is an active, mindful, respect-filled engagement with others, and a striving to exhibit behaviors that enhance the dignity and inherent worth of all: expressing sincere appreciation; allowing for human fallibility; dealing directly with each other; being creative in problem solving; maintaining a sense of humor; actively listening and clarifying what we hear; letting others have their say; respecting boundaries that may differ from our own; respecting confidentiality; refraining from harmful gossip about others; and speaking honestly.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board is tasked with the fiduciary leadership of the UUSA; that is, the Board is in an ethical relationship of trust with the congregation to shape the vision and long-term goals of the UUSA. The Board ensures that the UUSA is externally effective, internally efficient, and fiscally sound. The Board creates policy that helps ensure the Congregation’s mission—and this policy is subject to the Congregation’s approval.

We take this responsibility seriously. September 15, the Board will hold a retreat facilitated by Jackie Shanti, a lay-leader trained in leadership development by the New England Unitarian Universalist Association, our regional resource for trainings and consultation. We are excited to be able to use this time to clarify our mission and our understanding of each other’s working styles, so that we can best serve our congregation.

As we move forward, I want to emphasize that the Board is Us, and We are the Board. Each member of the Board is available to you to ask questions, share thoughts, express hopes. And at the same time, I am hopeful that the congregation treats the Board with respect and kindness as we all navigate this transition year. The Board is serving with the best intentions and with very skilled and good people that you elected.

Board members include myself, **Lynne Latham** (clerk, 2019), **Peter Lacey** (treasurer, 2020) and **Bo Mack** (president emeritus). Our At Large members are **Fran Plumer** (2019), **Emily Shankle** (2019), **Rob Fuderich** (2020), **Rosie Cowell** (2020), **Jeanne Ballantine** (2020), **Susan Rice** (2020), and **Casey Flueckiger** (youth representative, 2020). We are also fortunate to have **Joe Flueckiger**, who was president of the Board two years ago, serving to help build Board leadership.

As we enter our next year together, I hope the entire congregation will feel the positive energy and potential the Board is feeling right now!

A few notes:

- Congratulations to our Director of Religious Education, **Rebecca Fricke**, for achieving her credentialing as a religious educator! The time and thought Rebecca has invested in deepening her understanding of UU spiritual development is invaluable to our congregation. Thank you Rebecca.
- The Staff (**Rebecca Fricke**, Director of Religious Education; **Brenda Miller**, Music Director; and **Lea Douville**, Office Administrator) will take Interim Ministry Training together with **Rev. Steve** over the next two months as an online course administered by the UUA. Their working text is *In the Interim: Strategies for Interim Ministers and Congregations*, edited by Barbara Child and Keith Kron, Skinner House Books, and is available from the UUA Bookstore if you are interested in learning more about the Interim Process. (You can also access online information here: https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/mpl/transitions/interim_opportunity.pdf and

here: <https://www.uua.org/careers/ministers/interim>

Board Bullets from our clerk, **Lynne Latham**, will appear regularly in our e-newsletters to keep us aware of Board meeting work. Congregants can also read full minutes posted in the office.

Yours in faith, Karen

Meet the Transition Team! A typical part of an interim ministry is a Transition Team who works together with the interim minister, Reverend Steve Cook. Our job is to help pave the way for conducting a search and transitioning to a new settled ministry. Your Transition Team is: **Carolyn Cave, Jenn Chylack, Lisa Cyr, Mary Herman, Polly Peterson, and Steve Rice**. Please feel free to talk with any of us with questions or concerns about the transition.

Save the Date! Sunday, September 23, following the service for a congregational meeting. Reverend Steve Cook and the Transition Team will be leading a meeting to begin laying the groundwork for this important and exciting transitional year. Transition is a job for the whole congregation, so please plan to attend. Child-care will be provided. Watch for further announcements with details.

Music Notes

The UUSA Choir will meet for the first time this season on Sunday, September 9, at 8:45 A.M. to start up another year of fun music-making. Please feel free to join our happy group! Just show up! We'll handle details later. — Brenda Miller, Music Director UUSA

Social Events

The Women's Lunch Group meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at noon for spirited conversation over local, inexpensive cuisine. Our first September luncheon (September 13) will be at The Monkey Bar, 63 North Pleasant St., Amherst – look for us on the back porch! 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 **Sophie Rogers** at sophiesailing@gmail.com or 413-772-9814.

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.

Religious Education



Dear Congregation,

Our official Religious Education (RE) September start is coming up on September 9! We are very fortunate to have **Jacy** continue to care and nurture our youngest members of the congregation in the **Preschool**, and our **Elementary Group** is fortunate to welcome **Lesley Smith** back to lead us in a Mindfulness activities. As in the past, our elementary RE program will vary from one week to the next. We will be mixing cooking, mindfulness, art, science, and literature activities in with our discussions about the UU faith and practice.

I have developed a new program called *Sanctuary Keepers* for our **6th - 8th graders** and you will be seeing them in the sanctuary taking on roles that have normally been filled with adults. These youth will be rotating through the jobs of usher, sound manager, chalice lighter, greeters, etc. Most of our children have at least one experience a year when they are active participants in a service and this will let our middle schoolers become even more involved in the worship process.

This year we are going to shift gears with our **Youth Group** and go back to following a set schedule. During September we will work out what days and times work best for the majority of the group. I look forward to working on setting up the year with the youth and identifying what they would like to focus their time and energy on. I am hoping that the year can include a field trip to a big city and an urban UU.

The RE program follows the congregation's **Safer Congregation policy**, which requires two adults in the room with children at all times. Please consider donating your time to helping out one Sunday in the RE rooms. No planning is necessary, unless you would like to lead the group. Please talk to me or someone on the RE Ministry if you are interested.

Adult Programs As many of you know, we will be having a book discussion this fall – October 28 – on the

book *The Third Reconstruction How a Moral Movement is Overcoming The Politics of Division and Fear* by the Rev. Dr. William Barber II. If you ordered a book please contact me. If you need to order a book I can point you in the right direction. The more people, the better the discussion, so come talk to me. The RE Ministry is also open to providing other adult learning opportunities. Again, please talk to me if you have ideas.

Rebecca Fricke, Director of Religious Education
dre@uusocietyamherst.org or 413-687-8722

Dates to Put in your Calendar:

RE Sidewalk Sunday – September 2, 10:30-11:30 A.M.

Water Communion and first official day of RE: September 9.

Welcome Back Picnic - September 18th from 12:00-2:00 P.M. at Mill River Park, Amherst.

Upper Elementary and Youth will once again be volunteering for the Connecticut River Conservancy's Annual Source to Sea Cleanup – Saturday, September 29. (See details in the Green Sanctuary column of this newsletter.)

UUSA Fall Congregational Picnic

Sunday September 16th

Mill River Park*

*If it is raining we will picnic in our Social Hall.

Immediately following the Service from 12—2 pm

Suggested Food Contributions by Last name:

A-E: Salads

F-K: Appetizers

L-S: Main Dishes

T-X: Desserts

Come Enjoy Community and the Start of the New Year!

Sponsored by the UUSA RE Ministry

Questions? Call Rebecca Fricke 413-687-8722.



New Meetinghouse and Grounds Committee, and Kitchen Committee

By Anne Perkins

The UUSA Board of Trustees realized last year that our building and grounds, our most valuable asset (in terms of money), needs a stronger building committee. As the long-term chair of the Meetinghouse Committee, I agree. When we moved into the new/renovated building there was not a lot to do, but now there is.

We need a new Kitchen Committee! There was a separate Kitchen Committee when we moved back, but after they got the kitchen set up, they disbanded. This new committee will be responsible for an annual deep cleaning (which is needed now), as well as dealing with any needed repairs. A company is hired to clean the range hood annually. **Sophie Rogers, Chas Stevenson** and **Pat Rector** have agreed to be on the new Kitchen Committee, but we need at least one more member.

I will stay on the Meetinghouse and Grounds Committee this year. Two others have agreed to be on this committee: **Tom Fricke** and **Ron Grosslein**. **Tony Dinsmore** will continue to do small carpentry jobs for us, but he does not have time to be on the committee. I believe **Sue Kelsey** will continue to weed and water the grounds; a helper or two for her would be nice! Would you like to be on the Meetinghouse and Grounds Committee? We need at least one more member.

I really have enjoyed being on the Meetinghouse and Grounds Committee; as a retired builder I have an affinity for buildings. Both of these committees can benefit from new UUSA members and also recent retirees. It's a fun way to get to know one another.

Two workdays have been scheduled for this coming year: October 13 and April 13. The committees will make a list of the work to be done, both inside and outside. All members and friends should plan to help! Last year we washed dirty walls and did some touch-up painting.

Finally, the Green Sanctuary Committee is working with energy experts to make our building more energy efficient. I am heading up that committee, too, which works in tandem with the Meetinghouse and Grounds Committee. Watch the newsletter for more information on those projects as decisions are made about the work.

Please contact me at anneperkins43@gmail.com or at 413-231-2133 if you would like to serve on either of these committees. Thank you.

Green Sanctuary

Help keep the Connecticut River clean at the annual Source to Sea Clean Up with the Connecticut River Conservancy, Sept 29, 9:30 A.M., at the Herlihy Park in Whately. We may fan out from there to other sites.

(Directions: http://www.schtools.com/membersnew/public/facility_directions.cfm?Org=MIAA&FacilityID=5946)

This is a project for UUSA congregants of all ages, the Green Sanctuary Committee, and the UUSA Youth Group. We will work from 9:30 A.M. to noon. Please bring work gloves, rain boots, shovels, and rakes. The Connecticut River Conservancy will provide extra gloves, trash bags, and t-shirts. The site is very steep and very muddy. We'll be on the lookout for ticks and poison ivy.

The UUSA has participated in the Source to Sea Clean Up for many years – and it is making a difference. Each year we pull out less trash.

The Source to Sea Connecticut River Clean Up is a great way to be outside, in the water, and with friends doing good work. Please join us.

Sign up at a Sunday service, or email:

Ron Grosslein rgrosslein@astro.umass.edu

Karen Fisk karenmargaretfisk@gmail.com

Rebecca Fricke dre@uusocietyamherst.org

See you at the river!

Social Action



Sanctuary The week of **September 17** our Society's help is needed to support **Lucio Perez** by providing meals. Lucio has been in sanctuary at First Church since October 2017. He sees himself as representing all families who face separation because of deportation. The following help is needed to provide meals for Lucio and/or Lucio and three children.

Two people are needed to provide evening meals on Monday (September 17) and Thursday (September 20) for Lucio and three children; one person on Tuesday (September 18) and Friday (September 21) to provide food for just Lucio. All of these meals should be brought at 6:00 P.M. to First Church. Two people are needed on Saturday (September 22) to provide a noontime meal for Lucio, his wife Dora and three children.

If you can help, please contact **Mary Beth Seminario**, our UUSA representative to the Interfaith Sanctuary & Solidarity Network, at 413-253-0894, mbsem@comcast.net.

Not Bread Alone On **Saturday, September 29**, our Society is responsible for providing a noon time meal at Not Bread Alone, the soup kitchen at First Congregational Church in Amherst. **Eight people are needed.** Help out and meet new people while doing good! We work in shifts cooking 9:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.; serving 11:45 A.M. -1:30 P.M.; clean-up 12:00 - @ 2:30 P.M. We always have fun. NBA is located in the low rear of the first Congregational Church (aka First Church) with access off the Spring Street parking lot. If you can help in any way (even for only an hour) please contact **Mary Beth Seminario**, 413-253-0894, mbsem@comcast.net. THANK YOU!!

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. 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**, sophiesailing@gmail.com.

Our Caring Ministries



Prayer can be a curse

a cry...a gesture

a silence

an acceptance of life,

a protest...a folded hand

an open palm...a clenched fist

a song

a dour way of life,

but also:

caring for another,

thanking for love

by giving love,

standing firm in humanity

in amazement—struggle—

uncertainty—

and doubt.

J. G. Jacobs

In the Stillness is Dancing

Our Minister, Caring Circle and Pastoral Care Team are all available to help during difficult times.

Our Caring Circle coordinator is **Catharine Porter**. Please contact her or your own Caring Person for rides, food, and simple needs. Other Caring Circle members are **Sue Alexander, Linda Callahan, Sue Kelly, Mary Latham, Karen Mack, Martha Nelson, Susan Rice, Chas Stevenson, Lynn Sussman and Gordon Wyse**.

Our Pastoral Care Team co-coordinators are **Pete Rogers and Mary Wyse**. Other members are **The Reverend Elizabeth Alcaide, Charlie Atwood, Rob Fuderich, Mary Herman, Carol Johnson, and Fran Plumer**. Please contact one of them for more complex or personal needs.

We send loving, healing thoughts to **John and Susan Barbaro**, Paula Costain, **Courtney Gordon, Janis Gray, Vickie Hinson-Smith, Carolyn Holstein, Lois Kackley, Rachel Peterson, Fran Plumer, and George Sulzner**.

We send our sympathy to **John McClean** and his family on the death of his wife **Cindy**.

We also note the passing of a minister who served our congregation from 1991-1997. *UU World* reports:

“The Rev. Dr. **Eileen Bonnie Devlin** died on March 1, 2018, aged 65. Graduate of New York University in 1986, where she earned a Ph.D., and of Harvard Divinity School in 1990. Ordained in 1991 by First and Second Church of Boston, Mass. A consulting minister in Roxbury, Mass., before being called to serve congregations in Petersham, Amherst, and Kingston, Mass., and Bradenton and Lakeland, Fla. Served interim ministries in Brookfield, North Easton, and Barnstable, Mass.; Andover and Franklin, N.H.; and Woonsocket, R.I. A percussionist and music therapist, Devlin released two solo albums, *Action of Grace* and *The Drum and the Chalice*.”