

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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Important Information

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NEWSLETTER

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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!

Printed on recycled paper



Schedule of Services

Sunday, October 7, 10:30 A.M. – *Deeper Than the Skin*

Reggie Harris and Greg Greenway

Born three days apart, ancestry flowing through the same portal of History, Richmond, VA, Reggie Harris and Greg Greenway are on a pilgrimage together – one that began three decades ago. The racial divisions that are the reality of America started them in two different worlds, but the amazing bonds of music, respect, admiration, and shared vision have brought them together as friends and colleagues. The musical and spiritual blooming of this history has become *Deeper Than The Skin*, the telling of their stories through words and music. It is a great American story, informative and inspiring in so many ways. How to build bridges couldn't be more important at this moment in history. How to face struggle with hope, and even joy, is the gift they have to give.

Sunday, October 14, 10:30 A.M. – *A Fine and Dangerous Season*

Rev. Steve

A celebration of autumn. Please join us for this intergenerational service.

Sunday, October 21, 10:30 A.M. – *The Imperfections of Freedom*

Rev. Steve

The very same quality that allows the world and all of us to change and grow in wonderful ways also allows hurricanes, floods and people to make bad decisions.

Today is our Dedicated Offering Sunday.

Sunday, October 28, 10:30 A.M. – *Remembering Our Saints*

Rev. Steve

As we look toward the ancient holidays of All Saints and All Souls Days, our Universalist heritage reminds us that there is more to them than candy and costumes.

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.

Along the Way

The Hasidic Rabbi Zusya once said: "When I am called to give a final account before the Heavenly Throne, I am not afraid of being asked, 'Why were you not like Abraham?' for then I will answer, 'Because I am not Abraham.' And if I am asked why was I not like Moses, I can answer, 'Because I am not Moses.' But if I am asked, 'Why were you not like Zusya?' what then will I say?"

Let me recast this classic. If the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst was called to give a final account, you might say you are not afraid of being asked, "Why were you not like the Christian church?" for you would then answer, "Because we are not the Christian church." You would not be afraid to be asked, "Why were you not like the left wing of the Democratic Party?" for you can answer, "Because we are not the left wing of the Democratic Party." But if you were asked, "Why were you not like the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst?" what then would you say?

As of a person, the most radical demand that can be made of any institution is that it live up to its own founding principles and purposes. That is the standard, the beginning and the end, of institutional accountability. Are you, in fact, doing what you said you were going to do? Have you kept faith? And if not, why not?

Those are demanding questions. They are all the more demanding because the standards against which the institution is being judged are not externally imposed or unfair. They are the standards upon which the institution itself has decided that it ought to be judged. There is no begging off by saying it has nothing to do with us. These are the choices you made, the work you said you were going to do, the goals you set for ourselves.

Part of my work with you in this interim year will be to encourage you to ask yourselves, "How is it that we have not been like the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst; yet how is it that we have, indeed, been like the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst?" There is both challenge and joy in discerning the answers to those questions; I look forward to helping you in that discernment.

Rev. Steve

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.

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 Dedicated Offering's recipient on October 21 will be The Care Center in Holyoke.

If you have dropped out of school, had a baby, live in poverty and the world tells you you've failed – college and the opportunities that come with it seem impossible. So how do we change this? In short, The Care Center in Holyoke reignites a passion for learning through photography, Shakespeare, yoga and rowing. Rigorous HiSET prep, college exposure, and endless encouragement prepare students for college. With Bard College, The Care Center runs Bard Microcollege Holyoke, where low-income women can earn a college degree while being bolstered by its proven supports: daycare, transportation and counseling.



Three years ago, Candice (fourth from left) had lost faith that she would ever get to college. Today, she is completing her bachelor's degree at Smith on a full scholarship. She is a graduate of the nation's first "Microcollege" at The Care Center—a college giving women a second chance at an education.

The result? Women who never imagined they would go to college are earning associate degrees from Bard College and completing bachelors' degrees at Smith and Trinity. They are reading the latest translation of *Homer's Odyssey* and envisioning themselves writing for *The New York Times*. They have internships at the Mayor's Office and plans to become architects. Executive Director Anne Teschner explains, "People living in poverty and people of means need the same things – intellectually, emotionally, physically – to succeed. This understanding has defined our work."

The Care Center serves young mothers in poverty, a population whose personal circumstances present consistent challenges to traditional higher education. Each student's situation is unique, but the myriad of issues students deal with include poverty, hunger, unstable housing, and domestic violence. In the long run, The Care Center aims to eliminate some of these challenges by helping women earn college degrees that will lead to competitive, living-wage careers. However, in the short term, poverty and the issues that it perpetuates shape the reality within which it operates. The Care Center's built-in supports (daycare, transportation, counseling, camaraderie, persistent encouragement) are essential.

The Care Center is also working with Wayfinders, the largest developer of affordable housing in Western Massachusetts, to develop housing in downtown Holyoke for young parents in college. The program has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *The Boston Globe*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 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,

My seatmate leaned over as the bell chimed for our first service of the new year. “Where is everyone?” I looked up and the sanctuary was only about a third filled. “Maybe it is because we are in transition,” I speculated. By the time the last waves of the opening bell sounded, however, the seats were full to overflowing with familiar friends and with new folks soon to be friends. Yep, we are in transition—and that transition is *exciting!* Sharing the experience of finding our way, seeking a new minister, and supporting one another as life gallops apace only deepens the relevance of what it means to gather in community—especially with our UU faith uniting and guiding us.

Rev. Steve conducted a service with deep meaning—reminding us as we gathered abundant water that others do not have the luxury of clean water on tap. He also gave us a clear explanation of what his role is as interim minister—to arrive, help, and then go.

Interim process

Just to re-iterate: 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.**

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

Board Retreat and Leadership Training

The Board met in retreat together September 15 with Jackie Shanti from the New England UUA as facilitator. The objective was to learn more about each other’s work styles so that we can achieve more together. We also had three particular goals. We hope to 1) define the work of the Board in support of the Interim Year; 2) better define the overall visionary role the Board takes on each year; 3) discern how we will help the UUA with long-term leadership development to ensure there are always people ready and eager to take on leadership roles. I’ll report on the retreat in the next newsletter.

Members of the Board are also taking a workshop October 13 at the New England UUA called Claiming Our Spiritual Leadership. If you are interested in attending, please let me know. The fee is \$25 per person. I’ll share what we learn there also in a newsletter.

Meantime, it was wonderful to witness the sanctuary fill up as the bell of welcome resonated through our beautiful, beloved congregation. I am looking forward to this remarkable year together.

Yours in faith, Karen

Please note: Board Notes from our clerk **Lynne Latham** will appear regularly in our e-announcements to keep us aware of Board meeting work. Congregants can also read full minutes posted in the office.

- Board members are always available to chat. Please don’t hesitate to ask questions and to simply check in and thank a Board member for the work they are doing. Board members are: myself, **Lynne Latham, Peter Lacey, Bo Mack, Fran Plumer, Emily Shankle, Rob Fuderich, Casey Flueckiger, Jeanne Ballantine, Rosie Cowell, Susan Rice, and Joe Flueckiger**, our leadership consultant.

Ministerial Search Committee

Your Search Committee is in gear and making progress on our quest to call a new minister for UUSA. We had a retreat at the end of August with our UUA coach, Debby Bergh. She worked with our first search committee last year, so she is well able to give us good advice as we move along.

The first search committee last year did an incredibly good job preparing materials for ministerial candidates and doing an extensive survey of the congregation. You, the members and friends, did an incredibly good job filling out a lengthy and thoughtful survey. We hope you will be pleased to hear that we are going to use the results from that survey as we start this new search. Out of about 150 members, 115 filled it out, which is an incredibly high return rate for survey, so we feel that it provides excellent information about our congregation.

We would, nevertheless, like to hear from new members or from any of you who did not respond last year. To that end, we are offering two times for “cottage meetings” after Sunday services. The first meeting, on **September 30**, may have already happened, by the time you read this. If you missed that one, there will be another on **October 7**, after the Sunday service. Meetings will begin at 11:45 A.M. in the Conference Room. **Sue Kelly** and **Janis Gray** will facilitate them. Childcare will be provided. We hope anyone who would like to contribute their thoughts about our new minister will be able to come to a meeting, so we can incorporate your ideas as we come up with a picture of our Society to present to ministerial candidates. We will add ideas from the cottage meetings to the results of last year’s survey as we start this new search. You can also talk to any one of us. We welcome your input!

We look forward to working with you and for you this year, as we search for a new settled minister.



Ministerial Search Committee:

*Front row, L-R: Charlie Atwood, Louise Grosslein, Jess Murphy
Back row, L-R: Sue Kelly, Carol Johnson, Janis Gray, Kiana Diggs*

Membership

We are pleased to report that **Jon Kent** and **Rob Fuderich** added their names to our venerable Membership Book in July. Each resides in Amherst.

A New Member Recognition Ceremony is planned for November for Jon, Kent and those individuals who joined our UU Society last year but were unable to attend the ceremony last June. It will be a celebration with meaning for everyone!

If you are interested in becoming a member, please speak with **Rev. Steve**. For more information, you can also stop by the Welcome Table in the Social Hall following a service!

Meetinghouse & Grounds



Many hands make light work! Join the Meetinghouse Committee for our **Fall Building Workday**. Please mark your calendars for **Saturday, October 13 from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.** (we may end sooner if all the work is done!). Volunteers will wash and/or paint walls that need it. We'd love lots of help from youth and adults. If you can, bring rubber gloves, large sponges, rags, buckets and small ladders. Please **contact Tom Fricke at 413-345-4462 or tjfricke@gmail.com** to let us know that you'll be coming and if you're able to bring your own tools. Thanks!

Meetinghouse and Grounds Work Accomplished during the Summer of 2018



- Left: The coat closet pole was cut back by **Ron Grosslein** to prevent coats from covering the light switch/sensor – the light would stay on or off when a coat covered it;
- Middle: Ron removed the elbow of the downspout and took out “stuff” that was preventing the rain from going down the spout;
- Right: The Rainbow flag and the Black Lives Matter banners were replaced with solid signs by **Steve Rice** and **Mark Gamble**; many UUs contributed money and time to this effort.



Sue Kelsey kept the gardens weeded, mulched, and watered all summer, with some help from other UUs.

Green Sanctuary

Insulation Excitement

by Anne Perkins

The UUSA has been granted 90% of the cost of adding insulation to the several locations in our meetinghouse! The Green Sanctuary Committee is administering a UUSA Green Fund. We have hired Bruce Harley, an energy consultant, to give us advice on how to make our building more energy efficient and how to save energy dollars. This summer he spent several hours in the building with **Steve Rice**, **Ron Grosslein**, and me. He went up into both attics – over the sanctuary and the social hall – and made several recommendations – which are not yet finalized.

However, the first one has borne wonderful fruit! He suggested we contact Energia, an insulation company, to ask them to insulate the attic of the sanctuary as well as the attic wall between the old and new buildings. Mark Tajima of Energia informed us that Berkshire Gas currently has funds to pay up to 90% of the cost of insulating in nonprofit buildings. The UUSA has been awarded \$9855. The Green Fund will pay only the \$1245 Berkshire Gas will not be paying, as well as other items the Green Sanctuary Committee is contemplating based on the not yet complete report from Bruce Harley. We'll let you know about other items as we move forward.

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 October luncheon (October 11) will be at a place to be announced. 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.



Enjoying food and fellowship at our Fall Congregational Picnic at Mill River Park

Religious Education Ministry



Thank you to all of you who attended the UU Fall Picnic! Like last year, it felt more like summer than fall, but we all appreciated the sun while in the shade, the playground and the good company.

The RE program is off to a wonderful start. Our preschool teacher **Jacy Armenti** and her assistant **Anna Stanforth** have a room full of little children and I am running the K-5 program like a one-room schoolhouse. Please welcome our new families and help them get acclimated to our faith traditions. Thank you in advance to **Lesley Smith** for dedicating her mindfulness talents to the elementary program once a month, to **Kate Rice** for helping me to facilitate the Youth Group, and last but not least, I want to thank the RE Ministry who helps to keep me on track and volunteers on an as-needed basis.

Adult Programs This month the RE Ministry is sponsoring a book discussion on October 28 about Rev. Dr. Barber's book *The Third Reconstruction*. If you are interested in joining the discussion please talk to me or to **Susan Rice**. We have a few books left for people to buy. The reading is part of a larger conversation our congregation will be having about white supremacy.

If you work with or know of a community organization that the children could support in some active way, please let me know. If you are interested in sharing yourself or a talent or interest that you think the children would appreciate, please talk to me. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me.

Thank you for sharing and caring,
Rebecca, Director of Religious Education
(frickeDRE@gmail.com, 413-687-8722)

Social Action



Just One Thing On the second Sunday of every month a collection occurs for the Survival Center. A basket is placed in the foyer for these items. Two Sundays before that date, an announcement appears in the e-bulletin detailing what foods and other items are needed. Members of our Society have been very generous in the any years we've been helping our neighbors in need through the Survival Center and elsewhere. Thank you!

Sanctuary The week of September 17, members of our Society provided evening meals for Lucio and his children when they visited him in sanctuary at First Church Amherst. **Susan and Richard Rodney, Maria Lydia Spinelli, Gabriela Horvay and Mary Beth Seminario** prepared and brought this food. Our Society will

again be responsible for providing evening meals the week of December 10.

In addition to helping provide meals, help is needed in providing transportation for Lucio's Springfield-based children and wife when they visit him, as well for driving other immigrants to medical appointments and for providing round-the-clock staffing at First Church for Lucio. If you are interested in helping, please contact **Mary Beth Seminario**, mbsem@comcast.net, 413-253-0894.

ION Corner Members of ION (Interfaith Opportunity Network) have revisited and developed a new mission statement which more accurately describes us: *ION is a lay interfaith network based in Hampshire County seeking to strengthen the bonds of mutual respect and understanding. We desire to learn from each other's faith traditions, rejoice in the many things we have in common and appreciate our differences. We respond out of our shared concern for peace, justice and the earth.*

The Hampshire Mosque, located at 451 Russell Street, Hadley (across from Stop & Shop), is now open for daily prayers. The parking lot has been finished and interior renovations completed.

ION likes to have a "backup" representative from member organizations when the regular representative is unavailable. It meets every month except for July and August. If anyone is interested, please contact our UU Society's ION representative, **Mary Beth Seminario**, mbsem@comcast.net, 413-253-0894.

Deeper Than The Skin

A Musical Presentation on Race in America performed by Reggie Harris and Greg Greenway

When: October 6, 7:00 - 9:30 PM

Where: UU Society of Amherst



Their Story

Reggie and Greg have a unique story. Born three days apart, ancestors through the same portal of History, Richmond, VA, they are on a pilgrimage together – one that began three decades ago. The racial divisions that are the reality of America started them in two different worlds, but the amazing bonds of music, respect, admiration, and shared vision have brought them together as friends and colleagues. Their stories together form the quintessential American story. The music that flowed from these experiences is powered by unadorned truth, raw and riveting, beautiful and uplifting. Echoing Gandhi, they believe that in telling our truths, we are able to rise up from the past and build bridges to the each other and the future. The presentation will be interactive and there will be time at the end for discussion.

Reggie Harris is a Woodrow Wilson Scholar and the Music Education Director of the Living Legacy Project of the Unitarian Universalist Association, co-leading tours through the historic sites of the Civil Rights movement in the South. Solo, and in the duo, Kim and Reggie Harris, he has led hundreds of programs on Race and Social Justice. Greg Greenway has been heard on NPR's All Things Considered, Mountain Stage, and Car Talk. He's played Carnegie Hall and had the honor for two years of having his song, "Rosa Parks," play when rosaparks.com was opened. For eight years, he was one third of the successful Folk Trio, Brother Sun. Together and individually, Reggie and Greg have brought the issue of Race before audiences all across North America.

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



We share with you **Rev. Steve's** beautiful pastoral prayer/meditation from our opening worship service on September 9.

“O thou, Holy One of Blessing, we give thanks for this day,
for it is the very day of our lives; our yesterdays are now memories and our
tomorrows are but dreams, so may we live this day to the fullest.

“In this day let us use our gifts and talents, to bring joy to our
lives and, in any way given to us, add our own small contribution to the great
Spirit of Creative Love that ever moves within our hearts and in our world. In this
day, if it be for us to give, may we give fulsomely; if it be for us to receive, may we
receive gratefully.

“Keep us ever mindful of our place in the great family of Life; let us know
those bonds of love, from those most intimate to us, to
those whose claim is but our shared humanity, but who are nonetheless deeply our sisters and brothers.

“And now, in the silence, with the voices of our hearts, we lift up our own thoughts,
prayers and petitions.

“In returning and rest we shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be our
strength. Blessed be the silence, and amen to our prayers.”

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, Lynn Sussman** and **Gordon Wyse**.

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

We send love and support to all those who are struggling with illness, bereavement, or difficulties of any kind in your lives or the lives of your loved ones.

Small Group Ministry

If you've never been in a small group, or have in the past and want to try again, we have such a program, and we are looking to expand. We invite you to sign up for a “regular” or typical ongoing small group, an eight-week group, or a one-year group. We are open to starting a themed group, for example, a group focusing on growing older. There are many possibilities! We also have a knitting group, which is part of Women4Women, Knitting for Peace, which welcomes new members.

In coming weeks look for our information and sign-up table in the Social Hall or contact **Mary Wyse** (413-549-5406) or **Anne Louise White** (413-367-9761).