

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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Important Information

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Lea Douville

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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 to jsgray@crocker.com.

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

Since March 15, 2020, we have been holding our Sunday Services online to help protect the health of our community, and we will continue to do so at least until May 10.

Join us a few minutes before 10:30 a.m. on Sundays at <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/805733172> or call in at +1 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 805 733 172 when prompted.



Sunday, April 5, 10:30 A.M. – *The Interdependent Web of All Existence*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

The seventh principle of Unitarian Universalism is “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” What does that actually look like, where can we find these values enacted in our congregation and in larger Unitarian Universalism, and how are we called to live this principle?

Sunday, April 12, 10:30 A.M. – *Easter: Practice Resurrection*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

The story of Easter has been a source of strength for nearly two thousand years. What in our own lives might need resurrection, and how is resurrection already happening around us?

Sunday, April 19, 10:30 A.M. – *Earth Day*

The Green Sanctuary Committee

Today is our Dedicated Offering Sunday.

Sunday, April 26, 10:30 A.M. – *Choir Sunday*

Stay tuned for more! 🎵

Texts of some sermons are available to members and friends of UUSA by request. Send email to office@uusocietyamherst.org Many older sermons and readings are posted on www.uusocietyamherst.org. Click on the “SERMON ARCHIVE” button on the right side of the home page.

Dedicated Offerings

One Sunday every month (except for June, July, and August, we schedule a Dedicated Offering to recognize and financially support worthy organizations engaged in projects that reflect our guiding Unitarian-Universalist principles. Organizations are suggested by both individuals and committees of the Society, and the program is managed by the Minister and the Dedicated Offering Committee. No one is required to contribute to our Dedicated Offering – this is a voluntary initiative.

Our **March Dedicated Offering for the Gandara Center** raised \$330.

Our **April Dedicated Offering** will be for the **Western Massachusetts Sunrise Coalition**. The Sunrise Movement is a national youth-led environmental and social justice movement fighting for a just transition and livable future. Last spring, chapters of Sunrise, called hubs, started popping up all around Western Massachusetts. In the fall, it formed the Western Massachusetts Coalition. On December 6, members marched in the streets of Springfield to demand that representative Richard Neal sign the No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge and endorse the Green New Deal. Currently, it is putting pressure on our representatives, hosting phone banks, planning for Earth Day, and training and growing the leadership of a new generation of activists. This movement is youth led, but everyone has a part in the movement. Sign up for the Amherst Sunrise email list at bit.ly/amherst-sunrise-signup, or check out its website at sunrisemovement.org to learn how to get involved.

Midweek Joys and Sorrows – Wednesdays on Zoom at 6:00 P.M.

Led by Rev. Rachael Hayes

Everyone is welcome to come together for a midweek service of Joys and Sorrows, to share and to witness. <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/760290601> or call in at +1 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID 760 290 601 when prompted.

If you would like help getting to know Zoom for use as a meeting participant, or if you would like help setting up a Zoom meeting for your congregational event, committee meeting, or small group, please reach out to Lea in the office: office@uusocietyamherst.org

Minister's Letter

Dear UUSA,

In the last three weeks, our lives have changed. We became an online community rather than a physical one. We learned – and are still learning – how to have meaningful worship over Internet and telephone connections. (If you would like some help accessing our services over Zoom, please reach out to Lea in the office!) We are doing our best to stay connected with the people whose hands we touched each Sunday.

We have closed our building to minimize the risk of spreading the virus. We still host Wednesday Community Breakfast with Craig's Doors, but this service now happens outside. Sunday morning worship services, religious education, and meetings now happen online and by phone.

This will continue at least until May 10, following Governor Baker's stay-at-home advisory. I urge you to continue to stay at home as much as possible, continue excellent handwashing protocol, and to minimize your trips out for supplies. Please do continue to exercise as you are able and get into the spring sunshine when you can. Keep a six-foot distance from anyone who's not part of your household.

Everything about this pandemic is hard. During this time when we crave the consolation of those we love, we need to remain apart to protect each other. This truly is a time of loss and grief in our culture, and we're all going through it at the same time, and many of us don't have someone to give us a hug. Please be gentle with yourself and those around you. Not everyone will have the same response to this moment, and what's hard about this pandemic may be compounded by things that were already hard.

I may be working from home, but I am still here. Please reach out if you are having a rough time, if you are sick, if you are afraid. I am here. The Pastoral Care Team and Caring Circle are still here, staying in touch with the members of the congregation. You may get a phone call from one of them. If you haven't gotten a phone call and would like one, let us know!

We, the minister and staff and board and leaders of UUSA, have committed to keeping our community going during this crisis. Please continue to support the congregation as you had planned with your current-year pledge and offering plate contributions (which you can send by check or through the website). If you are still financially comfortable, I invite you to share what you have with the minister's discretionary fund; if you have lost income due to COVID-19 and need financial help, please let me know.

If our Sunday services have been a good part of your week, invite a friend. The Zoom account we use can accommodate 500 participants. If you know someone whose religious community is not currently meeting, or anyone who might appreciate our service, anywhere in the world, please invite them to join us.

In this time, we share hope from one person to another. By sharing we keep it alive much better than we ever could on our own. Let that hope be our connection while we are physically separate. Let that hope sustain us.

In faith,

Rev. Rachael

Virtual Lunch with the Minister, April 22 at 12:00 P.M.

Note new link and meeting ID, but phone number is the same as for last month's virtual lunch:

<https://uuma.zoom.us/j/193118329> or call in at +1 646 876 9923 and enter Meeting ID: 193 118 329.

Message from the President

*Making decisions in times of crisis takes bravery. And, in the case of our minister, a quality of care that is infinitely admirable and laudatory. I want thank **Rev. Rachael** for making difficult decisions with the health and well-being of our congregation as the primary decision-driver. And I ask our congregation to respond with compassion and gratitude, recognizing this leadership.*

*As we all navigate uncharted territory in the response to Coronavirus, we need to support one another with loving-kindness, patience, and recognition of leadership as charting the way forward for all of us to follow. Thank you **Rev. Rachael**.*

Hello friends,

Diversity takes many forms. Among those is how we like to worship. Some people cannot wait for Joys and Concerns, while others grit their teeth and wait for it to be over. Some people love the spoken meditation, others revel in moments of complete silence (maybe sweetened by the burble of a baby). Some yearn to hear stories that illuminate, others prefer music, music, music.

If you read this article from the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations – [Reasons for Adding a Second Service](#) – you will see a number of good reasons to increase our outreach by adding more than one service. Among those good reasons is that not everyone worships in the same way.

Our current service is much beloved. Especially by those who attend. Many people do not attend though, because it really is not meeting their needs. We don't know those people necessarily because they are not there. Would they be there if we offered a meditation-centered service? Or a sermon and prayer service? Or a week-day night Vespers service?

Unitarian Universalism is a powerful faith – a life-changing, life-affirming, evolving faith that places hope at its heart and reason at its head. I want more than anything as a UU to share my faith with as many people as possible because I believe it makes a difference to preach the inherent worth and dignity of people. I believe it makes a difference to hear our minister say: Everyone is important. The person you love is important, the person you had a fight with last week is important, the person you do not know is important.

As we continue our discussion of adding to our already beloved service offering, it is important to remember diversity and honor difference.

Yours in faith, Karen Fisk, President. Board of Trustees

Fundraising



Because of COVID-19, UUSA is not going forward at this time with the Silent Auction originally planned for May 3. A big “thank you” to all who'd already offered an imaginative and impressive array of fun (and community-building) services. We are brainstorming other ideas to replace this important event. You will hear more from the Fundraising Committee soon!

Religious Education Ministry



I am writing to you from the end of March, about two weeks after the UUSA decided to go virtual. Even now, none of us knows what will happen, how things will progress or when we will all be able to come back together. We will get through this by being careful and taking care of each other from a distance. Humans live their lives not knowing. It is during uncertain times when we need to rely on our Seven Principles the most. We are

an integrated web. Each and every person is important. And it is up to all of us to do what we can to respect each other and give each other support.

It can be hard to get things done when we are thinking and worrying. Give yourself permission to take some time to sit quietly. Pet your cat, play a game with your child, hold a loved one's hand, call a good friend, reach out to someone from the UUSA – find some time to breathe and just be.

Parents spend a good deal of time, even when we are not coping with a pandemic, wondering what to say to children about what is happening in the world. Out of curiosity, I went online and typed in “what to say to children about COVID-19.” I found a good post by UNICEF which you can find here: <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>.

There are many Zoom opportunities for us all to connect. Make sure to check out the weekly announcements so you can stay up to date.

Take care everyone, and see you on Zoom!

Rebecca Fricke, Director of Religious Education

Meetings for Children, Youth, and Families Please contact **Rebecca Fricke** for Zoom links, dre@uusocietyamherst.org

1) Parent Zoom – Thursdays at 8:30 P.M.

2) Time for All Ages – during congregational worship (<https://uuma.zoom.us/j/805733172> or call in at +1 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 805 733 172 when prompted)

3) Children's Zoom Joys and Concerns – Sundays 12:00 P.M.

Adult RE: Guided Reflection Thursdays at 3:00 P.M. led by **Rev. Rachael Hayes**

Let's reflect together. We may be facing new situations, but we have resources to help us process our emotions and the events of our lives. Bring a notebook and pen or pencil.

<https://uuma.zoom.us/j/120832036> or call in at +1 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID 120 832 036 when prompted.

Green Sanctuary

Now an Online Talk at Noon on April 5 Carbon Dividends: Keeping Carbon in the Ground & Spurring Innovation

Climate change presents an urgent call to action. Personal actions are important, but only one third of all emissions are under our direct control. Policies that put a price on carbon have the power to change the economics to keep carbon in the ground, spur renewable energy innovation, and stimulate the economy. When combined with a dividend that is reimbursed to citizens, it also provides a just solution for low- and middle-income families.

Several presidential candidates are supportive of carbon pricing and dividends, and our state legislature is also considering a carbon pricing bill, which has been co-sponsored by 93 reps (60% of the MA House).

The presenters are Lora Sandhusen, chair of the Pioneer Valley Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL), and **Jeff Clark**, who is a UUSA member, CCL volunteer and long-time climate activist. The Citizens Climate Lobby is committed to getting bi-partisan support for market-driven solutions to climate change.

Go to <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/805733172> or call in at +1 646 876 9923 and enter Meeting ID: 805 733 172.

Social Action



Computers for asylum seekers Jeffrey Mazur writes: I am part of the Western Mass Asylum Support Network, a network of individuals helping 27 asylum seekers or recipients of asylum that have recently moved into the valley. We are looking for two working computers that can access the Internet for an asylum seeker and an individual who is in the US under the convention against torture. Both need their own computers to study English and to be able to look for work. If you have an old computer that is not in use that works and can connect to WIFI, and would be willing to share it with someone in need that would be great.

In community,

Jeff

Jeffrey_mazur-at-hotmail.com

Music Notes



During this extremely unusual time, I would like to thank everyone for continuing to tune in to services. We have been working diligently (thanks mostly to **Lea!**) on improving the sound quality of what you hear musically over your computers. I invite feedback and any expert advice on the subject! I hope you have been enjoying the sound of my lovely Bechstein piano, which soon, as with all instruments, will be going out of tune. I will have to decide whether to have my tuner come in to my house or not.

CHOIR SUNDAY Well, Choir Sunday is not going to be the Choir Sunday we are all accustomed to. **HOWEVER**, we are brainstorming to come up with something meaningful and entertaining for you in some shape or form for **Sunday, April 26**. Please stay tuned, and again, if anyone has good computer/sound engineering/editing skills, we could use your assistance in this project. Thanks so much. Please just contact me (email address is in our online directory, or ask Lea). I'm all ears!!

Brenda Miller, Music Director

ION CORNER

On March 16, ION (Interfaith Opportunities Network) convened an "ION Earthcare" – a face-to-face meeting of 18 people from eight ION houses of worship involved in environmental issues. The purpose of the meeting was to learn what different faiths were doing as well as to organize future mutual efforts.

Our regular ION meeting in March, our first Zoom meeting, went well with 15 participants. ION is promoting the Mass Flag Campaign, which seeks to have the MA state seal change. Massachusetts and Mississippi are the only two states in the United States which have racist images on their flag or seal. In Massachusetts, the image shows a sword above an American Native person's head with the state motto beginning "by this sword we seek peace." People from ION faiths are asked to call Senator Karen Spilka, President of our State Senate, to show support of change of our state flag/seal.

Mary Beth Seminario, UUSA representative to ION

How to Block Spam or Phishing Emails

You have probably received emails from people you know or don't know that appear to be spam or a phishing, i.e. asking you for money or gift cards, etc.

Don't respond to emails from people you don't know. If they appear to be someone you know, check their email carefully. It's probably a deviation from their real email address. Take, for example, the recent phishing email that appears to come from **Rev. Rachael Hayes**. Her real email is revrachael@uusocietyamherst.org. Here I'm using the characters "-at-" to substitute for the symbol @ to fool bots that capture email addresses on the web. I recently received an email that appeared to be from her, but the email address was **revrachael.uusocietyamherst-at-gmail.com**. Note that this email came from gmail.com, not uusocietyamherst.org.

Rules to follow:

1. Don't respond to emails from people you know or don't know that appear to be spam or phishing attempts.
2. Definitely don't click on any documents or links in these emails.
3. Don't trash these emails, but block them or mark them as spam. How this is done varies by your email provider. On Mac mail for example, I can block senders simply by right clicking on their email address and selecting block. Find out how to do this with your email provider. Check their website for details.
4. Report phishing attempts to your email provider.
5. If you do get spam or phishing email from someone you know and it appears that the email address is correct, their email address has probably been high-jacked. Let them know by forwarding the email to them, preferably at another email address if they have one.
6. If your email address is high-jacked and someone is using your email address to send spam or phishing emails, change your password immediately, then make sure you have 2-step authentication enabled to further protect your email account. Talk to your email provider to learn how to turn on 2-step authentication.

The email server that we use at the UUSA is guarded by high security and it's very unlikely that an email ad-

dress from uusocietyamherst.org will be high-jacked and used for spam or phishing. **Janis Gray** and I have worked on the UUSA website to scrub email addresses from the site to hopefully reduce the number of times that you are contacted with spam or phishing schemes. If you have any questions or want to forward suspicious emails to me, feel free to do so.

Steve Rice
Webmaster

Editor's note: For the same reasons outlined by **Steve**, we are no longer including our members' email addresses as hyperlinks in this newsletter, so that we may reduce phishing attempts and continue to post the newsletter on our website.

Our Caring Ministries



Praying

It doesn't have to be
the blue iris, it could be
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
small stones; just
pay attention, then patch
a few words together and don't try
to make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway
into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.

Mary Oliver

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 **Linda Callahan, Carolyn Holstein, Gabriela Horvay, Mary Latham, Karen Mack, Martha Nelson, Lynn Sussman, Gordon Wyse** and **Naomi Yanis**.

Our Pastoral Care Team coordinators are **Charlie Atwood** and **Fran Plumer**. Other members are **Rob Fuderich, Gene Herman, Rev. Rachael Hayes, Carol Johnson, Pete Rogers**, and **Mary Wyse**. Please contact one of them for more complex or personal needs.

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

Denominational Affairs



Unirondack Unirondack is a Unitarian Universalist summer camp located in the Adirondack Mountains of New York on Beaver Lake. As the waves of information continue to come in from medical professionals as well as our professional networks of camp leaders around the country we are working to prepare for the many different outcomes.

While we are still waiting to make a call for this summer's sessions, we want to at least share with you our plan for the next 45 days. First and foremost, we want to tell everyone that as much as we want to start this Spring season on time, we have no choice but to reschedule our QSA Weekend, Adult Paddling Adventure, and our inaugural Writer's Retreat. This is obviously a great disappointment for our campers and saddens us to say, but we hope you will consider joining us for them next spring! As of now we are holding off on deciding on Family & Friends Weekend, and we will make that call by April 15. We will decide on Young Adult, Men's Weekend, and Women's Weekend May 1, summer viability until Ballou May 15, Ballou 1 & 2 July 1, Family Camp and Adult Camp by July 15. For more information you can email Director-at-unirondack.org or visit www.unirondack.org.