

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Important Information

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

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

MINISTER :

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

revrachael@uusocietyamherst.org or leave a message with
Lea Douville, below.

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR:

Lea Douville

413-253-2848 (office) or office@uusocietyamherst.org

Limited in-person office hours. Collecting email/voicemail
daily.

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Rebecca Fricke 413-687-8722 or

dre@uusocietyamherst.org

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: Brenda Miller

413-253-7855 or music@uusocietyamherst.org

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

President: Karen Fisk

karenmargaretfisk@gmail.com

413-210-0960

Vice President: Susan Rice

scarewrice@gmail.com

413-253-4485

Clerk: Emily Shankle

eshankle13@gmail.com

509-551-4950

Treasurer: Peter Lacey

placey1@comcast.net

413-665-3198

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.

Printed on recycled paper



Schedule of Services

Wednesdays, 6:00 P.M. – *Midweek Joys and Sorrows*

The 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.

Sunday, June 7, 10:30 A.M. – *Search Not Afar for Beauty: Flower Communion*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Join us for our annual flower ceremony. Decorate your home worship space with flowers; wear a flower in your hair or on your shirt. Most of all, bring yourself. You are a flower in our garden.

<https://bit.ly/2XiX7PL> Meeting ID: 943 1788 5499 Password: 656222 Or call in at +1 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 943 1788 5499 when prompted.

Sunday, June 14, 10:30 A.M. – *Perfect Avocado Day*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

We take time to celebrate our lives as they are. We honor celebrations large and small, including the high school seniors bridging to young adulthood.

<https://bit.ly/2zITHg4> Meeting ID: 957 8885 6212 Password: 705119 Or call in at +1 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 957 8885 6212 when prompted.

Sunday, June 21, 10:30 A.M. – *Father Sun*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

It's Father's Day and Summer Solstice! We celebrate the longest day and bless the dads of our lives.

<https://bit.ly/2yLXsRu> Meeting ID: 936 4932 1075 Password: 311799 Or call in at +1 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 936 4932 1075 when prompted.

Sunday, June 28, 9:00 A.M. and NOON – *General Assembly Sunday Morning Worship*

Join the Unitarian Universalist Association for the largest annual gathering of UUs joining in worship. The worship service will include a collection for the Tomaquag Museum, an indigenous museum featuring an extensive collection and archive of Southern New England tribal communities.

Live stream information to be announced, services at 9:00 A.M. and Noon with virtual coffee hour to follow.

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.

The total for our **May Dedicated Offering** for the **Children's Advocacy Center of Hampshire County** will be announced in a future newsletter.

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

The Board of Trustees has agreed unanimously that resuming in-person worship at this time poses unnecessary risks to our beloved congregants.

We have voted to follow the recommendation of the UUA and continue on-line worship services through June 2021, or until a vaccine or reliable treatment is found for Covid-19.

Although we continue virtual worship apart from each other, we also continue to nurture the faith and hope that binds us no matter where we are.

The Board of Trustees

Karen Fisk, Susan Rice, Peter Lacey, Emily Shankle, Ben Brau, Rosie Crowell, Rob Fuderich, Jeanne Balantine, Casey Flueckiger, Joe Flueckiger

Minister's Letter

Dear UUSA,

I feel like I'm starting to catch my balance. The first month of distance ministry was an adrenaline rush to Easter. The second month was the dawning realization that we weren't taking a break from a reality that we will return to find just as we had left it. The third month brings the knowledge that we are in the process of building our next normal, whatever normal means to any of us.

At the beginning I whooshed in with lots of energy to help us shift into new ways of connecting as a congregation. Over time I realized that the pace I set for myself was not sustainable. It's hard work to live in a pandemic, to study the news all day and listen for the slightest shift in guidance.

Over the last two months, scientists and medical workers have learned a lot about the virus, so we have more thorough advice to base our planning on now. The national Unitarian Universalist Association advised that congregations plan for a year of online gathering, and our UUSA Board voted to keep worship online only through June 2021. Many of the things we love about in-person worship (singing, emphatic speech, physical closeness, holding hands, social hour conversations, and seeing each other's unmasked faces) are not safe to do in person right now; at least online we can still sing, speak passionately, converse, and see each other's faces, people of all ages and health conditions together. Following the guidance of scientists and our values, we can adjust as new developments emerge, but I am profoundly grateful for the foresight of our Board. Now that we've made that decision, we can create a plan with more intention. We can figure out what a sustainable UUSA looks like in our new reality. We can try new things and evaluate whether they do what we had hoped or not.

Changing circumstances (like no longer meeting in person, no longer casually bumping into each other in the meetinghouse) have shifted the ways we gather. Many committees have already reported changes in the way they do their work. I will be starting new programs in the fall. I have plans for a book discussion series: our first book will be *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, in either the [original](#) or [young people's](#) editions.

I am also starting a Lay Worship Associates program. I have decided that what our worship needs more of is you! The staff and I put on a heck of a Sunday morning service, but the heart of our congregation is its people. All youth and adults are invited to [apply](#). Don't be daunted by the application – part of this process is getting to know you better! There are no wrong answers.

This is a time of possibility and creativity, but it also holds a lot of loss. We all had to let go of months' worth of expectations, and for many of us uncertainty and sadness filled the space where they had been. Please take care of yourself and be gentle with yourself. Please reach out for help when you need it, whether that need is groceries, bills, or a listening ear. You are so loved. I pray that you are all safe and well.

In faith,

Rev. Rachael

Message from the President

Hello friends,

Our annual meeting this year, June 7, will be conducted via Zoom following our worship with a short break to let everyone stretch and refresh. We hope to keep it quite short, just a half hour. Information about the agenda, reports, slate for election, and the budget will be available on a password-protected page on our website. You will be able to ask questions ahead of the meeting via email. More information on the URL to follow via email. Please make it a priority to attend or vote by proxy so that we have a quorum and can move forward.

This will be my last message to you as Board President. I have been honored to serve this beloved congregation and will continue to serve on the Board as Past President and as a member of the Leadership Development ministry. Susan Rice is on the slate to become President. I wholeheartedly believe in her leadership, her deep spirituality, and her passion to keep our congregation and our faith strong and vital and together despite the disruption and distress caused by the pandemic.

This year has been remarkable not least because we welcomed our new, settled minister Rev. Rachael Hayes. My gratitude to Rev. Rachael for her clear-headed leadership has only been deepened as the second half of our year took on an unprecedented path with the COVID-19 pandemic. Rev. Rachael preserves via virtual platforms the essence of faith that binds us and the elements of practice that express our reverence and joy, no matter where we are or how we are able to connect. That is powerful. The Board is grateful for her leadership, which is informed deeply by her ability to listen, discern, and act with compassion and vision.

The Board also wants to note with tremendous gratitude the anonymous donor who pledged \$20,000 in matching new and increased pledges from our Congregation. More information about our pledge drive will be provided by that committee, but I wanted to also express deep thanks to all who have pledged to help keep this community financial sound.

Please read the information from the Annual Meeting, please vote, and please continue to be the beloved community you are for all of us.

Yours in faith, Karen

Religious Education Ministry

It is June everyone! I don't know about you, but this past spring seemed to go on for a very long time. Now we enter a time of light, sunshine, green and ... yes, well, masks and uncertainty. I hope that despite all of the unknowns we are facing, you are able to take time to be outside with your pets, your family and your friends (AT A DISTANCE). If none of those things apply to you, go outside and tune into the bird songs or phone a friend or a loved one while sitting under a fully leafed-out tree.

This month we will have three special services. June 7th is Flower Communion. Be sure to send Lea a photo of yourselves with a flower! Rev. Rachael encouraged us to look for flowers we wouldn't necessarily be able to pick if we were in person such as a tiny flower, a type that wilts the second you pick it. Or maybe a flower that is in your neighborhood or state park that you can fit into your selfie.

On the 14th we will Bridge our two seniors **Rosie Dinsmore** (left) and **Casey Flueckiger** (right). These two young women have gone through our RE program almost from the time that they were born. They both have been an integral part of our organization in many different ways and we will wish them well as they enter the adult world of college and jobs and yes, quite a bit of uncertainty.



Photos thanks to Lea Douville

And on the 21st we will be celebrating Summer Solstice and Father's Day.

Please do not worry about our UUSA RE program. It will continue in one form or another and the RE Ministry, Jacy and I are all trying to figure out how to be available to all of you in the most effective way. Families, please look out for a survey in your emails. As we plan for the summer and next year, we will rely on your opinions and ideas so it is very important that we hear from as many of you as possible.

Take care everyone,
Rebecca

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.

Death and Dying in the Time of Covid-19 – Wednesdays at 10:30 A.M.

Whether we die of Covid-19 or something else, whether we die this year or far into the future, each of us will die someday. It’s natural that in this time of pandemic, our thoughts might turn to death. What do we need to die well?

This group will be convened by **Rev. Rachael** and will explore the questions and feelings arising around the concept of death. You need not commit to attend all sessions, and drop-ins are welcome.

The topics will be responsive to participants’ needs. Some possible topics include making wishes known to family and healthcare providers, what to do with possessions, memorial services, obituaries, right relationships, life review, writing or recording goodbyes, and visualizing our deaths.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://bit.ly/3e33qNP>

Dial by touch tone phone: +1 646 876 9923 Meeting ID: 847 853 127

Membership

Re-Introducing Nan Weigersma! After an absence of a number of years, **Nan Weigersma** has returned to UUSA, a community where she has deep roots. She and her husband were married in a UU church. At UUSA, Nan served for a time as co-chair (with the late **Lee Pershyn**) of the Stained Glass Committee. Her work laid the foundation for efforts which led ultimately to the restoration of the powerful angel figure that graces the wall of the Meetinghouse sanctuary.

Nan has led a remarkable life. She grew up on a New England dairy farm, has worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington D.C., and taught economics for nearly two decades at Fitchburg State University. Her disciplinary sub-specialty was economic development, particularly women’s roles in third world nations.

During the Vietnam War years, to the consternation of her parents, Nan volunteered to travel to Vietnam in association with a United Nations World Food Program. Because the the war had caused so many male casualties, Vietnamese women were often at the forefront of postwar reconstruction efforts. ”They literally did a lot of the heavy lifting after the war,” Nan said.

Nan’s husband, **John Delville**, a physicist, died 15 years ago’ He had worked in laboratories in the Boston area. John served as President of the Board of UUSA from 2001—2002. Nan currently enjoys life at the Applewood Retirement Community in Hadley. Nan is looking forward to an eventual return to in-person services so that she can revive previous friendships and make new ones.

She has a daughter and son-in-law who live in nearby Montague and a 20-year-old granddaughter, Maya.

When asked what has helped her through the stresses of the pandemic, she was quick to respond: “My family and nature.” She has beautiful views of trees, grasses and rolling hills just outside her window.

*Thanks to **Pat Rector** for this interview.*

Women’s Circle meets via Zoom at noon on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month. It’s an opportunity to connect with friends and become better acquainted with other women in the congregation whom you may not know as well. Join Zoom meeting by clicking here: <https://bit.ly/35nW8jB> Meeting ID: 983 8988 5674; Password: 135383 or call in at +1 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 983 8988 5674.

Social Events

UUSA THE VOTE UPDATE !!!

UUSA the Vote began fast. True to what we said in the May newsletter,
“Although we are staying at home, we are not standing still.”

Our partner is **Reclaim Our Vote**, a black-led campaign to increase turnout among voters of color by 20% in at least 4 states (targeted states are North Carolina, Texas, Arizona, Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia). It is non-partisan and uses postcards, phone banking and text banking activities. UUSA the Vote got off to a faster start than the Core Team expected. We got a special request to get into action on the day of our Zoom Kickoff, May 14. Our volunteer response was up to the task; **UUSA the Vote Volunteers** wrote 660 postcards between May 20 and May 23.

As this newsletter gets published UUSA the Vote is organizing to write 1,700 postcards to Texas voters of color to let them know that they may have been removed from the voter rolls and to provide them with contact info for checking on their voter registration status. The mailing target is June 5.

UUSA the Vote adds new volunteers every day and especially wants to invite **new UUSA members and friends** who get this newsletter to get involved. Click <https://forms.gle/MEZqgSkWZY03vBuR9> to submit a brief Volunteer Questionnaire. This is a great way to learn more about UUSA and begin to connect to its brand new project. Everyone can help this effort with donations. We estimate that \$25 covers the cost of 40 postcards, stamps and related paper supplies. Send checks payable to UUSA with “UUSA the Vote” in the memo space to: UUSA, P.O. Box 502, Amherst MA 01004-0502, attn. UUSA the Vote.

From the experience of the earliest postcard writers:

“I think the **power of a hand-written note** – even if it is scripted – cannot be underestimated. And, I enjoy time spent with my college-aged daughter accomplishing a task of mutual interest and concern. Our postcards are written in hope and love at our dining room table to a person who may be facing barriers to voting. May it land on their table and provide a bit of ease.” – **Lea (and Celia)**

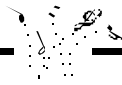
“I had never expected to have the chance to be signing ‘Ellen, Georgia NAACP Volunteer’ and that felt good. That **felt on-the-ground and closer to the action than I expected**. I learned later that Reclaim Our Vote gets its lists for postcard writing from the NAACP. Ergo...I’m a worker-bee inside that partnership. Nice!” – **Ellen**

Who is involved? The UUSA the Vote Core Team is **Naomi Yanis, Maria Lydia Spinelli, Steve Rice, Ellen Pile** and **Anne Louise White** (who orders and organizes postcard packets as the “Coordinator of Coordinators”). Our first effort, with a mailing target of May 23, used five coordinators: **Sue Alexander, Pete Rogers, Jeanne Ballantine, Steve Rice** and **Ellen Pile**, and we had over 20 writers.

These actions resonate with UU Principles: <https://www.uua.org/justice/vote2020/grounded-uu-values>

*This is jointly sponsored by the **Dismantling Systemic White Supremacy Ministry** and the **Social Action Committee***

Music Notes



Choir member **Lauren Croce** discovered a YouTube version of “How Can I Keep From Singing?” that so moved her, she wanted to share it with all of us here. She writes, “I love the arrangement.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLPP3XmYxXg&feature=youtu.be>

Green Sanctuary

Make Your Voice Be Heard on Climate Change

As we observe the impacts of the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that our government at every level is unprepared for current threats to our well-being. I believe that climate change is another such threat on the near horizon. Climate change is expected to contribute to more diseases as animals move to new locations and come newly into contact with people. Warmer average temperatures also make existing illnesses like Lyme disease a bigger problem, as the animals that carry those diseases can more easily survive during the winter.

Despite policies that have already been implemented, we are continuing to emit more carbon pollution year-after-year, making it more difficult to hit targets required to avert the worst impacts of climate change.

In the 2020 session of the Massachusetts legislature, there have been many promising bills for more aggressive climate action. As of May, many of the most effective climate bills have been stalled. However, the end of the legislative session is being extended and it is a great opportunity to write, email or call your representative.

Click to our [Make Your Voices Heard](#) page for a starter kit of letter, petition link and contact information of your representatives to help make your voice heard on climate change.

Our Caring Ministries



Do not try to save
the whole world
or do anything grandiose.
Instead, create
a clearing
in the dense forest
of your life
and wait there
patiently,
until the song
that is your life
falls into your own cupped hands
and you recognize and greet it.
Only then will you know
how to give yourself
to this world
so worthy of rescue.

Martha Postlewaite

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, Kate Dahlstedt, Gabriela Horvay, Mary Latham, Karen Mack, Martha Nelson, Lynn Sussman, and Gordon Wyse**.

Our Pastoral Care Team coordinators are **Fran Plumer** and **Charlie Atwood**. 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.