

# THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



## Important Information

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## NEWSLETTER

Copy Editor: Janis Gray

Production Editor: John Foster

Deadline for submissions: 15th of each month.

Email them to [jsgray@crocker.com](mailto:jsgray@crocker.com).

Please understand we cannot cut and paste PDF files into the newsletter, so submissions should either be Word documents, rich text files or written in the body of the email. 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



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## Schedule of Online Services

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**Sunday, March 7, 10:30 A.M. – *Time After Time: Honoring a Year of Life and Death with Covid-19***

**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

Join us a few minutes before 10:30 A.M. by clicking on <http://bit.ly/3q0hWue>. Or call in: 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 990 6828 8625 Passcode: 984892

**Sunday, March 14, 10:30 A.M. – *Appreciative Inquiry: A Spiritual Tool***

**The Committee on Shared Ministries of the UUSA**

Join us a few minutes before 10:30 A.M. by clicking on <http://bit.ly/3q0hWue>. Or call in: 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 990 6828 8625 Passcode: 984892

A congregation is a group of people who keep coming together with purpose. If we stopped, our building and minister would no longer be able to serve. What's more important, what we do together or how we do it? It's an interesting conversation starter! During this service, the members of the Committee On Shared Ministries will describe and offer an experience of Appreciative Inquiry. This is about how we relate to each other as members of a shared beloved community, whether we're referring to our UUSA beloved community or the larger beloved community or even the beloved community of the many different parts of ourselves. It is also a tool we can use to move toward a shared vision of our future together—a shared vision of coming together with purpose.

**Thursday, March 18, 6:00 P.M. – *Vespers***

**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

Join us a few minutes before 6:00 P.M. by clicking on <http://bit.ly/3q0hWue>. Or call in: 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 990 6828 8625 Passcode: 984892

**Sunday, March 21, 10:30 A.M. – *Spring Equinox: More Light***

**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

Join us a few minutes before 10:30 A.M. by clicking on <http://bit.ly/3q0hWue>. Or call in: 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 990 6828 8625 Passcode: 984892

**Sunday, March 28, 10:30 A.M. – *Passover: Plagues and Promises***

**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

Join us a few minutes before 10:30 A.M. by clicking on <http://bit.ly/3q0hWue>. Or call in: 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 990 6828 8625 Passcode: 984892

*Texts of some sermons are available to members and friends of UUSA by request. Send email to office @uusocietyamherst.org.*

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## Dedicated Offerings

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One Sunday every month (except for June, July, and August), we have traditionally scheduled a Dedicated Offering (DO) to recognize and financially support worthy organizations engaged in projects that reflect our guiding Unitarian-Universalist principles. Due to our Zoom-only services which have resulted in lower offerings overall, we are currently scheduling just one DO every three months rather than every month.

Our **special January Dedicated Offering** for **Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Presbyterian Church** in Springfield, MA. Raised \$1,500.

The **February-April Dedicated Offering** will be for the **Amherst Survival Center**. According to their website, as unemployment reaches record highs, the demand for the Survival Center's services has and will continue to increase. As we know, the pandemic and its economic fallout are far from over. Feeding America estimates that food insecurity in Western MA will grow by 55% this year, meaning that one in seven of our neighbors will not have access to the food they need.

Please donate to support the Survival Center's response to COVID-19. Financial contributions give the Survival Center the flexibility to respond as needs change. The Center can buy canned goods, extra milk, or a specific size of diapers as needed. Please give generously. Thank you so much for sharing what you can.

## Appreciative Inquiry: A Spiritual Tool

Dear Beloved UUSA Community,

As members of the Committee on Shared Ministries (COSM), we would like to say, “Great Work!” and “Thank You.” We are heartened by the continued strength of community that we are all holding together during this quarantine time. Many of us remember our time “in the wilderness” when we held services elsewhere while our building was being renovated. Perhaps that prepared us, a bit, for holding services online until we can safely be together again.

Our goal as a committee is to cultivate a congregational environment of inquiry, story telling, reflection, appreciation, celebration and dreaming about where we are going together. Although our congregation already does this (hooray!), the UUA has recommended an approach, called Appreciative Inquiry, which can help us do this even more.

*Define - What is our desired outcome of this Appreciative Inquiry?*

*Discover - What are our strengths?*

*Dream - What would work well in the future?*

*Design - What action do we need to take to make it happen?*

*Deploy - We're taking that action.*

These questions are examples of an Appreciative Inquiry process which is an approach for working towards desired change. Our beloved congregation might enjoy engaging in this process together both for the closeness and camaraderie that it engenders and for the movement towards our collective dreams.

During the March 14 Sunday Service, the COSM will teach us more about Appreciative Inquiry and how it could be beneficial to our congregation. It can also benefit smaller groups, families and even individuals.

See you then!

*Jess*

Mary Ann Gundersen, Rev. Rachael Hayes, Bo Mack, Jessica Murphy

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Religious Education Ministry



Check out **Rebecca Fricke's** Director of Religious Education Blog for past descriptions of Sunday activities. Rebecca's blog includes written descriptions, website links and photos. Any questions? Ask! Want to get involved? Email Rebecca at [dre@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:dre@uusocietyamherst.org).

<https://u2canuu.wordpress.com/>

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Social Action



**Not Bread Alone** On Saturday, January 30, **Mary Beth Seminario** was the only UU who helped that morning. She helped package donated produce for later distribution. There were plenty of people from another faith group “working” that day. NBA is practicing social distancing as people cook, package and distribute the tasty dishes. All food is handed out outdoors where people line up for their food. Our Society is responsible to help whenever there is a fifth Saturday in the month. The next time will be Saturday, May 29.

## Should UUSA Adopt the Eighth Principle?



The proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle for all Unitarian Universalists reads:

*We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.*

In January our UUSA community began its 8<sup>th</sup> Principle exploration with about 30 people reflecting on “What don’t we know about this?” and “What do we imagine for UUSA if we adopt the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle?” Our three 8<sup>th</sup> Principle ambassadors (**Naomi Yanis, Ellen Pile, and Betsy Wheeler**) facilitated.

### Here are some of the things some of us didn’t know and a few answers some of us gave:

- Has UUSA already adopted this and now we have to do it? (Answer=no)
- Why are we talking about this? (Short Answer=The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle is being considered for adoption by many UU congregations. Over 30 congregations have adopted it as of last October and are exploring how to live it with at least that many planning to do so before next summer.)
- Do we understand how this operates with the other Principles? Are there contradictions here? Doesn’t this mean the same thing as the 1<sup>st</sup> Principle: the inherent worth and dignity of every person? How does this affect individualism?
- Do we understand the words in the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle? Do we in UUSA have a deep understanding of Beloved Community? Do we understand accountability?

### Here are some imaginings and thoughts and, of course, worries:

- We could have more opportunities for discussions and projects.
- We could be more of a Black Lives Matter community.
- We could leverage our privilege to benefit communities of color and heal ourselves.
- We could develop relationships, visits, guests, vigils.
- We could look at our services, what’s on our walls, purchasing from BIPoC, hiring consultants and speakers.
- What would accountability look like? Perhaps, acknowledging our role in the problem, saying we’re serious about anti-racism, having action steps attached to the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle.
- I don’t know what it means or how to do it. We need to build skills for white people to do this. We can’t get stuck in the mud because this is hard and it takes long.

Wow! That was our amazing first hour connecting with each other about this. We will need to talk more about how we can bring an anti-racism, anti-oppression focus to our actions as a congregation and as individuals.

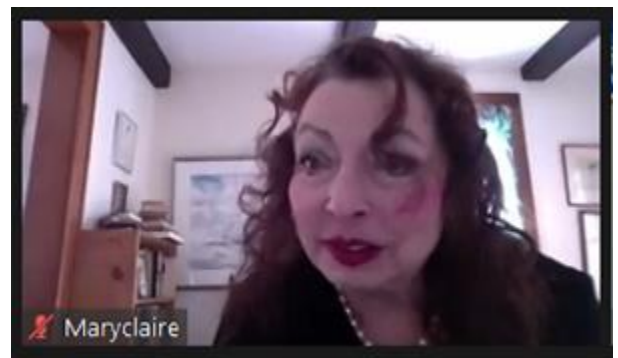
Consider joining the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle ambassadors who are imagining that we can work together on a project for our UUSA community without carrying the label of committee or task force. Email **Ellen Pile** to hear about our Zoom schedule.

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## A New Member

Welcome to **Maryclaire Wellinger**, who virtually signed our Membership Book before two witnesses from our Board of Trustees in a special breakout room following our service on February 21. Maryclaire, a poet and artist, was a UU in eastern Mass. before moving with her husband, John Fisher, to Northampton about a year ago.

Rev. Rachael is planning more Virtual Book Signings after services in the months to come. If you have interest in joining or have questions about membership, just reach out to her!



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## Social Events

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**Women's Circle meets via ZOOM at noon** on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Next meetings are March 11 and 25. These are opportunities to meet with friends and become better acquainted with other women in the congregation whom you may not know as well.

Join by clicking <https://bit.ly/35nW8jB> Meeting ID: 983 8988 5674; Password: 135383 or call in at +1 646 876 9923 and enter Meeting ID 983 8988 5674 . Please contact **Mary McKenna** if you want to be in the email notification list.

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## Our Caring Ministries

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I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.

Besides,  
They'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.  
Langston Hughes



Langston Hughes, novelist and poet, photographed by Carl Van Vechten, 1936

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 Cave, Lauren Croce, Kate Dahlstedt, Gabriela Horvay, Sophie Herman, Mary Latham, Karen Mack, Lynn Sussman, and Gordon Wyse**.

Our Pastoral Care Team coordinators are **Fran Plumer** and **Charlie Atwood**. Other members are the **Elizabeth Alcaide, 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.

As always 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 ones. We also remember those affected in so many ways by the pandemic and by the recent events in the nation's capitol. We send a message of hope that all of us as individuals, and the nation as a whole can heal from these traumas.

## *Pictures at an Installation*

The Installation of the Rev. Rachael Hayes as Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst took place via Zoom on the afternoon of January 31, 2021. We offer screenshots here that represent just a few of the elements of this very special virtual event.



In a pre-recorded video, volunteers from our Wednesday Community Breakfast moved from our kitchen into the sanctuary to light the chalice.



Also pre-recorded: An anthem by our choir, the altos joined by Congregational Administer Lea Douville! Partially visible watching the video in the frame at top right is the Rev. Kimberly Quinn Johnson, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Fork, who after the anthem would deliver the Installation's sermon.



Susan Rice (at left), President of our Board of Trustees, officiated "live" from home for the Act of Installation of The Rev. Rachael Hayes (at right), shown with our chalice now back in the minister's study in the meetinghouse.



The Rev. Alison Wohler, our Minister Emerita, Zoomed in from Columbus, OH, with the Prayer of Installation.

### **The Exchange of Gifts**

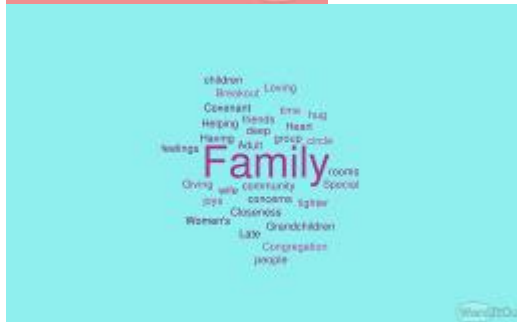
Rev. Rachael opened a wrapped gift from the congregation: a minister's stole designed by quilter and UUSA member **Lynne Latham**. Lynne's voice explained to her the symbolism of its design, called "Falling into Place." Yellow shapes at its top represent Rev. Rachael's "sunny disposition and the light you shine on this congregation," followed by "orange for the fields of butternut squash and pumpkin abundant in the town where you live," and "red for the vibrance and enthusiasm you bring to your job and with which you enliven this Society. . . . The reds are not packed so closely together that the color is unbroken, solid or static. There is still room to grow . . . May there always be a smidgeon of space, just a little more to do. May we grow together in a shared future that reaches with outstretched hands toward greater goals."

Rev. Rachael said her gift to us was "something we could enjoy right away: a UUSA Worship Artist in Residence to sing at the installation and five more times between now and June. Rebecca Stevens-Walter is a dear friend from seminary, a musician, and a candidate for ordination in the Presbyterian Church USA.



# Love Poems by the Congregation

During break-out groups during the February 7 service led by the Religious Education Ministry, DRE Rebecca Fricke and the Rev. Rachael Hayes, those in attendance talked about love, sang about love and pondered love poetry together. Consider these “word clouds poems” created by our collective thoughts. Can you find the poem you helped create?



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## Here We Have Gathered

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*Here we have gathered, gathered side by side,  
circle of kinship, come and step inside!*  
(Hymn #360, Singing the Living Tradition)

A look back at UUSA based on March newsletters from 25, 15 and 5 years ago:

### March 1996:

**“Challenging the Religious Right”** — Sunday, March 24th 12:00 - 1:30 P.M. Facilitator: **Bonnie Devlin**.

Our UU Service Committee has sent an “Action Alert” to help UU congregations with discussions and action plans on our 1995-96 General Assembly resolution of “Challenging the Religious Right.” During this hour-long program, we will view a documentary video called “Onward Christian Soldiers,” followed by a general discussion and possible action plans within the Valley (after all, look who our neighbors in New Hampshire voted for in the Republican Primary!). This program will help us to better understand the Religious Right, and to formulate our role and mission as a free faith movement. If you will need child care, please call Billie in our office at 253-2848.

**Bright Ideas** Have you made an entry in our Log Book for Bright Ideas? Recently the Board voted to provide a notebook, readily accessible on the table in the church office, where members and friends and record briefly their observations or suggestions concerning any aspect of our church life. Entries may range from notice of a leaky faucet to a proposal for tripling our endowment! Office Manager **Billie Bozone** will see that all jottings come to the attention of the proper person or committee. This Log Book is not intended as a substitute for phone calls or face-to-face conversation, just as a handy way for any one of us to make a note when the concern or inspiration is fresh.

**A Note from the Housekeeper** It occurred to me that some folks in our Society were not aware of our agreement with the Hampshire Educational Collaborative School, which rents our basement from Monday to Friday throughout the school year. The School agrees to store all its equipment, which is considerable, on Friday afternoons and to put everything away so that the rooms are completely bare for our use over the weekend. On Sundays, the RE Program sets up our furniture and then stores everything away after classes. . . . Small church groups may meet in the basement . . . if they agreed to leave it exactly as they found it. . . .

Several times this year, toys, chairs, and tables were left out, the door left unlatched, and lights left on downstairs sometime on Sunday afternoon or evening, and the School informed me of this early Monday morning. (They also inform **Paul [Rothery]** if the toilet overflows, but that’s another issue.) . . . We want to keep our excellent tenants, and to do so, we ask your cooperation in helping us honor our agreement with them. . . . Leave the space exactly as you found it. *Slam* the door so it will latch, turn down the heat, and turn off the lights. And if anyone would like to help the RE staff store the furniture at noon on Sundays, come on down and we will welcome you with open arms.

Thanks,

**Carol Rothery**

### March 2006:

**Come One Come All** to the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst’s **Intergenerational Dance** on March 4, Saturday, 4:00—5:00 P.M. Dancer Caller: **Anne Louise White** Music by: **Louise and Ron Grosslein**

Families, Singles, Youngsters, Elders — all welcome! No experience necessary. Spectators welcome. Where: Immanuel Lutheran Church, 867 North Pleasant St., Amherst. The dance is being held there because we were afraid panes would fall out of our stained glass windows! Donations welcome to cover the cost of room rental.

**BookTable** After basking in the unexpected warmth of a W. Mass. Winter, we’re ready to start up the Book-Table again on March 19. Plan on visiting us after the service and browsing through our [UUSA library’s] selections for discerning youngsters and adults.



**Finance Committee** We thought you'd like to hear some of our ideas for what we could do with a "fully funded" budget:

- Use 100% of our collection plate income for some worthy social service or charitable cause. (Right now, we donate 10% for this purpose and use the rest for our operating funds.)
- Establish a rainy-day fund to help us ride out those unexpected expenses or difficult times without major budget cuts.
- Pay our "fair share" of dues to the UUA — something this congregation did faithfully until a few years ago and which we now do at a fraction of what we should be paying.

These are our ideas — we'd be interested in hearing yours. We also look forward to a wider discussion in the congregation of how we can fulfill our dreams and make them real in the months ahead.

### **March 2016:**

**Green Sanctuary** The topic of green burials is in the news nowadays, as people become more conscious of death as a natural process and burial as a way to return to the earth in a natural and eco-friendly manner. Alison will be talking about both of these topics at the Earth Day service on April 17. And the Green Sanctuary Committee is organizing a film and talk about green burials to be held at a later date. Please stay tuned!

In the meantime, on Saturday, March 5 at 2:30 P.M. at The Jones Library there will be a talk on green burial by Dr. Joan Coan. You may also wish to check the website [www.greenburialma.org](http://www.greenburialma.org).

Finally, we recommend the book *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande. There will be a discussion of this book at The Jones Library on March 19 at 2:00 P.M.

### **Fundraising**

#### UUSA COMMUNITY TAG SALE OUR LAST MAJOR FUNDRAISER FOR THIS YEAR JUNE 4, 2016

This Tag Sale has a new aspect. We are asking Small Group Ministries, Religious Education Ministry, the Choir, Board, other committees and individuals to have their own tables.

Since most of us are involved in more than one of the above, this will take a bit of planning on everyone's part.

Start saving those attic treasures for your table. This will surely be an all-congregation event!!

More info – see **Fran Plumer** and **Rachel Peterson**

**News from the UUSA Youth Group** In response to the call for support concerning the UUSA participating in the Black Lives Matter movement, the youth group met to discuss our thoughts. This is the statement the group created and which they read during the January 17 service:

To quote John Oliver, "Everything is messed up!"

In true UU spirit, we find we have more questions than answers concerning the Black Lives Matter movement. We wonder why say Black lives matter when all lives matter. Why not say Latino lives matter, or Muslim lives matter, or children's lives matter?

As UUs, we remember that we have seven principles to help guide our actions, but we think there are universal morals or values that might govern all people, ideas that move communities forward, ideas like respecting difference, preserving lives, and helping people value themselves and others equally.

We believe that in order to move forward we need to de-escalate conflict. Yes, we do believe that All Lives Matter. But we have seen that violence in the United States, particularly violence involving police officers, is overwhelmingly against people who are not white. We think our country has ingrained prejudices that we need to actively counter to get past.

We believe police should be held to a higher standard, as the protectors of community, and that they need to think: "Black Lives Matter," every time they pick up their guns.

We realize that by insisting on liberty, justice, and equality for all people, we cannot just talk about our ideas, we must act on them. We as a nation have come a long way with equality, but we still have a long way to go. There is hope. We understand that getting involved is important. And we fully support getting involved in the Black Lives Matter movement, because we care about having a community that is just.