

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
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Deadline for submissions: 15th of each month.
Email them to 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!

SAVE THE DATE for a special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, April 25th @ 2 PM to approve proposed changes to the UUSA ByLaws. More details to follow in the weekly announcements.

Schedule of Online Services

Sunday, April 4, 10:30 A.M. – *Easter: Roll Away the Stone*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Join us a few minutes before 10:30 A.M. by clicking on <https://bit.ly/3m02Qop>. Or call in: 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 990 6828 8625 Passcode: 984892.

Sunday, April 11, 10:30 A.M. – *Striving for Climate Justice*

State Sen. Jo Comerford (Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester District)

Join us a few minutes before 10:30 A.M. by clicking on <https://bit.ly/3m02Qop>. Or call in: 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 990 6828 8625 Passcode: 984892.

Sunday, April 18, 10:30 A.M. – *Earth Day*

UU Ministry for the Earth

Join us a few minutes before 10:30 A.M. by clicking on <https://bit.ly/3m02Qop>. Or call in: 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 990 6828 8625 Passcode: 984892.

Thursday, April 22, 6:00 P.M. – *April Vespers: Earth Day*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Join us a few minutes before 6:00 P.M. by clicking on <https://bit.ly/3m02Qop>. Or call in: 646 876 9923 and enter the Meeting ID: 990 6828 8625 Passcode: 984892.

Sunday, April 25, 10:30 A.M. – *Sacredness, Worth, and Courageous Love*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Join us a few minutes before 10:30 A.M. by clicking on <https://bit.ly/3m02Qop>. 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.

Dedicated Offerings

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.

Social Action



Sanctuary On March 5, Lucio Perez received a formal stay of deportation from Immigration and Customs Enforcement for 12 months. After three and a half years of living in sanctuary in a small room at First Congregational Church in Amherst, he was able to leave the building with no threat of being apprehended and ride home to live with his wife and children. This one-year reprieve will allow him to enjoy his life with his family and his own church. On Saturday, March 6, outside of First Church, a huge gathering of supporters (including UUs) and speakers wished him and his family well. Rep. Jim McGovern as well as Lucio's attorney are working to obtain permanent residence and authorization for him to work legally in this country. Meanwhile, the Sanctuary Fund will continue to help support Lucio and his family. Donations to this fund can be sent to First Church, 165 Main St., Amherst, MA 01002 with Immigrant Sanctuary Fund in the memo line. For tax purposes, deductions for donations for specific people cannot be made.

UUSA FY2022 PLEDGE DRIVE

The U.S. Government recently extended the deadline to file taxes, but **April 15 is still the deadline for declaring your pledge to the UU Society of Amherst (UUSA)!**

Pledging allows us to plan for UUSA's financial future. We are grateful to the anonymous donor who will match all *new* pledges and *increased* pledges. If you are pledging for the first time or increasing your pledge (or renewing it after a lapse), that means your generous support will be **DOUBLED!!**

Thank you to all who have submitted pledge forms for the coming fiscal year. If you have not yet pledged, please do so as soon as possible, but no later than April 15, to give us time to finalize the budget and schedule congregational conversations prior to our Annual Meeting. You can pledge here: <http://bit.ly/3a9oXjH> If you have questions about your current pledge amount, contact Lea in the office at 413-253-2848 or by [email](#).

These folks support UUSA — we hope you will, too!

Sophie Hermann



My partner [Owen Gwilliam] and I contribute to UUSA because it provides a grounding force in our lives. Prior to the pandemic, we really loved the ritual of coming to church every Sunday and our kids looked forward to it as well. While Zoom church has some of the same effect, the entropy of our home can still suck us in during that hour.

We also recognize and appreciate the important role that RE has played in our children's lives in terms of a burgeoning interest and commitment to justice and spiritual openness. The OWL program also has fostered a great deal of dialogue about our bodies, gender, race, relationships that feels very positive at their young ages. Finally, the church is doing the work that we believe in, namely building beloved community here on earth. We believe in the UU principles and want to

use our incomes to financially support both the work and people/institutions doing the work. We look forward to many years of being a part of UUSA spiritually, in community, in raising our children, and financially.

Rob Fuderich

I became a member of the UUSA shortly after I retired and moved back to Amherst in 2016. The Society has not only become my spiritual community, it has offered friendship, community involvement, intellectual discourse and inspiration.

I have been involved in several small group ministries and the Board over the four years, and I pledge every year because I know that this wonderful congregation needs the funds to survive and thrive. But giving is more than keeping the congregation vibrant and alive. When I pledge and give, it is one example of my spiritual practice. The Buddhists call it "dana," which is a Sanskrit and Pali word that connotes the cultivation of generosity. The UUSA is an important component of my spiritual and social life and subsequent growth. The community has been especially important in offering us hope during these difficult times. I am grateful and I give.



Shawn MacLaren



I was originally attracted to the UUSA when I lived on Cape Cod because my sister belonged and said it was due to this organization that she came to fully accept me being Gay. I stayed because of the kindness and decency of its members and their efforts to help humankind, their commitment to walk their talk. Weekly services never fail to soften my heart and decrease any self-created sense of separation I might be holding toward other groups of people.

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Mary and Gordon Wyse

We have been members here for many years, and our attachment to this congregation is stronger than ever. What keeps us here? In a word, the people. We are at home in this caring, welcoming, and supportive community. We're among people who share our values and our commitment to justice and love, but who also challenge us to explore our beliefs and become more thoughtful in our actions. We're among dedicated people who accomplish things, from running the Wednesday breakfast to cleaning the Connecticut River every year, and people who create our weekly worship services and celebrations. These efforts, these people, sustain us.

We've taken part over the years in many aspects of the Society and feel we've made a contribution, but we've received so much more. There is an energy in the UUSA and a sense of moving forward, which bodes well for the future.



Anne Moore



The UUSA gives me a supportive community that shares my values and inspires me to find ways to express my commitment to social justice, equality, and equity.

This is such an exciting time for the UUSA! I hope you will join me in pledging your financial support for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Sue Alexander

It occurs to me that our past president might be credited for generating a significant increase in the number of Unitarians since 2016.

Although I had been a UU for more than 20 years, when I retired and moved back to the Valley in 2008, I didn't affiliate with a congregation. But when I woke up the morning after that fateful election day my first thought was, "I can't do this by myself." The UUSA held a candlelight vigil that night, which I attended. I knew I was going to need a place to nurture my spiritual life at the same time I was impelled to work for social justice.

For the first two years I attended, our UUSA had interim ministers. What was most impressive to me was the deep involvement of a congregation that warmly welcomed newcomers and kept a vital ministry moving forward on all fronts. I became a member in my second year as a tribute and commitment to this engaged "community of communities."

I understand "membership" to mean "mutuality." We are in this together. We care for one another, we worship together to find our place in the universe; collectively, we commit to nurturing our children and bringing about change in our community and our world. Therefore, we pledge whatever we can from our individual gifts and financial resources to an organization that is a blessing for all of us. This is a congregation on the move and I want to support the expansion of our mission!



Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will meet on Monday, April 12, at 7:15 P.M. on Zoom.

Social Events

Women's Circle meets via ZOOM at noon on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Next meetings are April 6 and 22. 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.

New Members

Please welcome **Linda Honan** of Granby (left), and **Ellen Kosmer** of Amherst (right), who virtually signed our Membership Book in a special breakout room after the service on March 21. Present for this joyful event were **Rev. Rachael** and three witnesses — more than the two required by our bylaws! — from our Board of Trustees: **Ben Brau**, **Anne Moore**, and **Richard Roznoy**.



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!

Religious Education Ministry

What Do We Appreciate About Ourselves?

During the Time for All Ages in our March 14 Sunday service, Director of Religious Education **Rebecca Fricke** invited UUs of every generation to answer this question in the “chat box.”

We are happy with ourselves for all these reasons ...

- Boiling syrup
- Listening well
- Walking up Mt Toby
- Perseverance
- Making some yummy chicken soup
- Baking cookies and bringing them to our friends in little packets
- Riding my bike to the Peace Pagoda this week.
- Taking a yoga class and speaking to a new member of our co-housing community
- Biking on my awesome bicycle that my sister gave me.
- Treating people kindly, Learning to make samosas,
- Fitness classes on Zoom three times a week!
- Cooking a meal together
- Taking yoga classes every Friday on Zoom through the Bangs center.
- Hosting a sleepover with my young grandchildren with thanks to the vaccine.
- Hiking at Quabbin
- Having a good family discussion this morning about empathy
- Being curious and asking questions.
- Having a new charity project in Vietnam
- Putting up bird feeders
- Moving two wheelbarrows of firewood
- Running
- Facing my past and mistakes
- Learning the Jerusalema dance, sort of!
- Supporting my daughter
- Playing music
- Taking long walks with my puppy
- Pruning blueberry bushes
- Walking 2 miles
- I'm good with my hands
- Swimming every day this week
- Listening to a friend who is about to die
- Showing discernment by not sending email response from a reactive place
- Doing full monkey pose in yoga and Building Legos and walking on the rail trail
- Clearing out my garden
- Painting together as a family

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Taking care of the chickens and turkeys
Helping neighbors get vaccines
Feeling the sun on my face this week
Helping my mom sign up for therapy
Sending my mom flowers for no reason
Asking my students how they are doing!

When I thought of what made me happy about myself I felt...

Smiley
Expansive
Seeing more than one side of a situation
Happy

Good
Peaceful
Strong
Proud
Proud
Better
Kind
Tired dog is a happy dog
Grateful
Joyful
Better
Pleasant
Thankful

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.

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

Our Caring Ministries



Between dawn and dusk

Between the dawn and dusk of our being, let us be brave and loving.
In our little passage through the light let us sustain and forward the human venture—in gentleness, in service, and in thought. Amen.

~ Carl Seaburg



Carl Gerrard Seaburg (1922-1998) was a minister, scholar, writer, editor and member of the staff of the Unitarian Universalist Association. He is best known as a hymn writer and editor and anthologist of liturgical materials.

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 Hermann, Mary Latham, Karen Mack, Lynn Sussman, and Gordon Wyse**.

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

Alcaide, Rob Fuderich, Gene Herman, The 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. May the vaccine and the arrival of spring be harbingers of hope for better times ahead.

Our hearts go out to the family of our former Interim Minister (2016-2018), **The Rev. Cynthia Frado.** She passed away at home in Hadley on Sunday, March 28, from stage four pancreatic cancer. We thank Cindy for her ministry to this congregation in a time of transition, and for her contributions to Unitarian Universalism. We will share information about memorial services as plans are made.

Here We Have Gathered

*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:

April 1996:

The Canvass: In Support of the Larger Family Many know the concept of the extended family: a shared home that reaches past a parent-child group to include brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, friends, and many more.

We here in our Unitarian Universalist Society must include the concept of the larger family. Beginning with our extended family, we welcome and reach out to a world of families that exists within and beyond our immediate community. Through our Society, we can reach out to a world of families composed of children, single or two parents, parents in diverse partnerships, and elders — all with different needs and natures. Even if you attend and participate in an occasional program, you are connected to children gaining religious education, adults gaining support and counseling, and programs operating far from you in place and time. We exist in connection to a much larger family.

As with the extended family, we must all pitch in. This Society houses, staffs and programs itself so we can give welcome and a helping hand to the world of the larger family. This Spring, let us enjoy canvassing the Society for its merit and its ability to maintain and strengthen itself.

The Canvass Committee

Collection for the Amherst Survival Center The following members and friends of our Society volunteered to collect food and cash at area supermarkets March 8 and 9, as part of the Interfaith Service Council-sponsored program to benefit the Amherst Survival Center: **Felicia Barber, Florence Bert, Mary Bray, Perry Conley, Marilyn Falkowski, John and Nancy Foster, Nilda Gomez, Marilyn Gonter, Ann Kirchoff, Maureen Kirk, Charlotte Kitowski, Jennie Lambert, Premila Nair (and Asha and Maya), Ernest Penchuk, Paul Rothery, Howard and Luba Reep, Kenton Tharp, and Dick and Jan Stevens.**

Despite the horrendous weather — heavy snow on March 8 and extreme cold on March 9 — more than a thousand pounds of food and \$211.63 were collected from patrons of Bread & Circus, Stop & Shop, and Victory Market. An additional \$121.82 was contributed by members of this Society through a special offering at the Meetinghouse during the service on March 10.

A potluck for newcomers! Friday, April 12, is the day for newcomers (mixed with some oldcomers) to get together. We'll meet from 6:00-8:00 P.M. in the Undercroft to socialize and share a potluck supper. Children are welcome. [Rev.] **Bonnie** will be present to talk with you. If you don't get a phone call from a Newcomers Committee member, feel free to call **Felicia Barber, Nancy Beswick** or **Molly Fortuna.**

April 2006:

Our beautiful UUSA banner is done! It was designed by **Barbara Yaukey**, sewn by **Jane Allan** and quilted by **Rebecca Fricke**, with help on the last of the stitching details from **Louise Grosslein, Carol Scheier, Carol**

Rothery, Alison Wohler and Milt Harris. Great job, folks! The banner will be hung on permanent display in the sanctuary, with a brief celebratory ceremony during the service on April 9.

Once each year, our banner will travel to a different city to join hundreds of other banners from UU congregations across the country for the opening ceremonies of General Assembly. The banner parade at GA is always a moving testimony to the enthusiasm and creative latent in our congregations. This year, Alison will take the banner with her to GA in St. Louis at the end of June.

Board News **Anne Perkins** and **Eve Posada**, representing the Green Sanctuary Committee, presented a proposal to change most of the lighting in the Meetinghouse to energy-saving fluorescent lighting. Hopefully, after a few minor questions are resolved, we can move forward with a plan. We applaud the work of the Green Sanctuary Committee to help us all come closer to living our Seventh Principle.

Fundraising Emily Dickinson is coming! Or at least, our B&B Weekend, Emily Dickinson's World. It will be October 13-15 this year. Our keynote speaker, Prof. Jane Donahue Eberwein, will be flying in at our expense. If you have frequent flyer miles that you are willing to donate to our case, please contact **Janis Gray**.

April 2016:

Our Wednesday Community Breakfast regularly feeds more than 100 guests and is really appreciated by all. Want to volunteer and join in this multi-generational community work? Volunteers from UMass and friends from the Newman Center have been regulars for the last few months and we want to thank **Ben Collison, Clare Cunningham, Ronan Lucey**. Also thanks to **Vicki Hinson Smith, Chas Stevenson, Elizabeth DuMont-McCaffrey** and **Darcy Dumont, Fran Plumer, Bella Halsted, Lynn Olson, Mary Wyse** and **Polly Peterson**. *Donations of breakfast condiments needed: jam/jelly, ketchup, hot sauce.*

Thanks, Glen, Clare and Sophie

Half the Sky Social Justice Project About six years ago, a small group of congregation members discussed a project that would support women and girls based on a book called *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. From these early discussions and following a congregational read, the Half the Sky project was launched. The project included awareness-raising activities within the congregation through newsletter articles and film nights, special Sunday services, intergenerational conversations, and the adoption of EDWON (Empowering Dalit Women of Nepal) as the recipient of our financial support. Over the course of several years, our congregation raised funds for EDWON through dedicated offerings and Nepalese craft sales. EDWON was thrilled with our generosity. The beautiful products displayed at the home of the late **Judy Smith**, and the graciousness of EDWON's Executive Director, Eva Kasell, made this project even more gratifying.

Given changes in our work group and other projects within the congregation and among our work group members, we have found it increasingly difficult to sustain the Half the Sky project. We feel very good about the things we have accomplished over these past several years, and like many such projects they often come to a natural end. This is where we find ourselves with Half the Sky.

We want to thank **Alison** and the congregation for their initial enthusiasm and on-going support. We have all learned a great deal about the needs of women and girls worldwide and about solutions that work to improve their lives. We were so pleased to learn more about the Women Knitting4Peace group during a recent Sunday service. The spirit of Half the Sky lives on in their work.

The UUSA 7th and 8th graders have been getting around for the past couple of months! Most recently they attended the Mosque in West Springfield in February, and they visited the Insight Meditation Center in Easthampton to learn about Buddhism in March. As a parent volunteer in the program, I am constantly impressed by our youths' openness to new experiences and new ideas. We have also been attending services together at the UU about once a month, and in April, we will have a special debriefing session where Alison will help us bring it all together. In preparation for planning our Neighboring Faiths Sunday service in May, we're hoping to help the youth relate their diverse experiences in the other faith communities to what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. I feel fortunate to participate in this program, and I believe that it's a growth experience for the adults as well as the youth!

Libby Walton Stanforth