

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Inside :

**Pastoral Care Team offers help
with at-home COVID tests
(Page 7)**

**We're forming a Search
Committee (Page 3)**

**New "Explore UU" classes to
start soon (Page 5)**

Important Information

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revrachael@uusocietyamherst.org

CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR:

Lea Douville office@uusocietyamherst.org

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Johnny Williams youthandya@uusocietyamherst.org

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

board@uusocietyamherst.org

[link to board minutes](#)

Co-Presidents:

Clerk:

Treasurer:

Anne Moore and Susan Rice

Louise Grosslein

Peter Lacey

Members At Large:

Carolyn Cave

Sue Alexander

John Gerber

NEWSLETTER

Copy Editor:

Janis Gray

Calendar Creator:

John Foster

Deadline for submissions: 20th of each month.

Email them to Janis Gray (contact Lea in the office if you need her email address).

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



Schedule of Services

As of press time, services continue to be online only. To join any service, click <https://bit.ly/3bDuwv3> Meeting ID: 988 1332 2308 Passcode: 866951 Or call in +1 646 876 9923 and enter Meeting ID: 988 1332 2308.

Sunday, January 2, 10:30 A.M. – *Afghan Resettlement in the Pioneer Valley*

Kathryn Buckley-Browner

Our guest speaker this morning is the Executive Director at Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Springfield.

Sunday, January 9, 10:30 A.M. – *Reparations*

Amilcar Shabazz

Our guest speaker this morning is a professor of history and Africana Studies in the W.E.B. DuBois Dept. of Afro-American Studies, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

**“Comfort Traps”
is the theme for Rev. Rachael’s January services**

Sunday, January 16, 10:30 A.M. – *Title to be announced*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, January 23, 10:30 A.M. – *Comfort Traps*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, January 30, 10:30 A.M. – *Title to be announced*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Do you know we have a UUSA YouTube Channel?

Original content from our Sunday services are now uploaded to our website, uusocietyamherst.org, with optional closed captioning! To view them, click [here](#) — and don’t forget to **SUBSCRIBE!**

Dedicated Offerings

Our Unitarian Universalist Society devotes each month to a new Dedicated Offering (DO) recipient whose representative speaks to us on the first Sunday. We split every Sunday’s offering plate 50/50 with the recipient organization. This move symbolizes the solidarity we feel with the organizations we choose to support, and it gives us all more opportunities to contribute. As always, please specify whether the funds you send to the office or by PayPal are for the Plate, your pledge, or some other purpose.

In November, we raised \$2,570 for **The Poor People’s Campaign!** We will report in a future newsletter what we raised in December for **The Literacy Project**.

Our January Dedicated Offering recipient is the Catholic Charities Agency of Springfield, MA.

Catholic Charities is subcontracted by the US State Department as a refugee reception and placement agency. In the past two years, the agency has placed and served populations that are Congolese, Iraqi, Bhutanese, Ukrainian, and Eritrean. Currently the agency is placing Afghan refugee families in the Pioneer Valley.

Resettlement for refugee families, though one of joy in finding welcome and security, is a long and often difficult process. After welcoming the newly arrived families at the airport, Catholic Charities settles them into their new homes, and provides rental assistance, case management, cultural orientation, English language learning, connections with needed social, medical, and employment services and assistance, and, together

with volunteers and agencies from the resettlement cities, supports and accompanies the families on the longer journey toward increasing economic self-sufficiency and healthy integration into their new community.

The single biggest challenge to welcoming refugee families is access to affordable housing. Catholic Charities has agreed to help refugees rebuild their lives in the Pioneer Valley. It has also committed to providing its refugee families rental assistance, even as it works with them to find employment and move toward greater independence.

Music Notes



Seeing as how we can't really SING TOGETHER much, we're doing quite well! We managed to sing outside twice this fall with others of the congregation, and those were indeed very joyful events.

Some of us also joined a congregational candlelit carol sing on a snowy Christmas Eve! Many thanks to **Rebecca Fricke** for the photo at right.

On Thursday December 9, we had an online gathering of some of our choir members. It was so nice to see faces and talk with each other!

We checked in with each other, talked about having a covenant or other statement of purpose, and possible future plans for a Choir Sunday event in the Spring!!

We treasure our connection with each other, and look forward to being able to do creative projects together.

We want to officially welcome two new members — **Emma Livingston** and **Craig Machado**!! Welcome to our merry band of silly singers!

Brenda Miller,
Director of Music



Join the Search!



Come one, come all, be on our search committee! The RE Committee is looking for volunteers interested in being on a Director of Religious Education (DRE) Search Committee. The DRE search committee will hopefully begin at the end of January and work over the next few months to search for, interview, and hire a new DRE after **Rebecca Fricke** says goodbye to us in June. All those interested, please email inquiries to **Maura Whalen**. If you do not have access to our UUSA directory (with Maura's email address, please contact **Lea** in the office.

Religious Education Ministry



PreK-6 grades The UUSA Religious Education program for children in PreK-6 grades will be meeting Sundays at the **Wildwood Playground from 9:30 - 10:15 A.M.** Please note the shorter time due to the colder temperatures! If it is raining, we will meet online and the link will be sent out Sunday morning. As soon as our Covid numbers go back down we will be heading inside for indoor programming, and we hope to offer both the K-2 and 4-6th *Our Whole Lives* curriculum. Until we are able to get into the UUSA building, we will

be flexible and dress warmly! Contact DRE@uusocietyamherst.org for more information.

Youth Group (YG) has been continuing to meet on Sundays at our regular 2:00 - 4:00 P.M. time. As the weather has gotten colder, we have been meeting indoors at the Unitarian Society of Northampton & Florence (with face masks, air purifiers, and wellness checks for safety measures). We cooked our first meal for the Interfaith Shelter on December 12 and had our first session of Touch Groups (a USNF YG tradition) on December 19. We did not meet on December 26 due to winter break, and will be back on Sunday, January 2 (online) to start off the new year on a good note! A link to the YG calendar can be found [here](#).

The Young Adults (YA) have been meeting on second Saturdays from 9:30 - 11:00 A.M., meaning that our next meeting will be on January 8. We are currently brainstorming ways to make the program more engaging as we will likely need to transition to hosting more meetings online in the future. If you have any thoughts or comments on this, please email Johnny at youthandya@uusocietyamherst.org. The YA calendar can be found [here](#).

Great news! UUSA member **Alyson Bull** wrote an article that was just published on *Pride and Less Prejudice*. It is OWL inspired and talks about the importance of using picture books in holistic sexuality education. If you are interested, check it out here: <https://www.prideandlessprejudice.org/blog/beyond-the-birds-and-the-bees>

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/>

Calling All UUSA Members

We are scheduling our **only** fund raiser for this year...a SERVICE AUCTION to be held on May 14, 2022.

With your help, it will be a huge success and a lot of fun for all.

We are inviting as many of you as possible to volunteer to pull together and work as a team to make this happen.

If you have helped in the past, please volunteer this year.

If you have never been a part of this event, please sign up. We'd love to have new members.

Working together, our great UUSA community can make it happen!!!!

To volunteer for this fun event, please contact Lea in the Office or a member of the stewardship committee.

With appreciation,

Your Stewardship Committee

Jeanne Ballantine

Elliott Kelly

Catharine Porter

Ministry of Membership and Welcome

New to UUSA? Or Not?

If you are new to our UU community, or have been around for a while and want the chance to learn more about Unitarian-Universalism or how to get involved in the life of our Congregation, our new **Explore UU** classes may be for you. These two-hour online classes will be held several times each year led by our minister, **Rev. Rachael**, and a member of the Ministry of Welcome and Membership.

UU 101 – Unitarian Universalist Identity – provides a broad overview of the history of our non-creedal faith, implications for our faith in the world today, and what it means to be a UU.

UUSA 101 – Getting Acquainted – provides information about how to connect with the people, programs, activities, volunteer opportunities at UUSA, and more generally, to explore the benefits and expectations of membership.

These fun, interactive classes are a great way to learn about our UU congregation and how it has evolved into the vibrant community it is today. You'll hear about the many ways to get more involved in the life of our community.

Come, meet others new to the Society and maybe some oldtimers as well! Remember to bring your questions!

The first classes will be held on:

- Tuesday, January 18, from 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. Unitarian Universalist Identity (UU 101)
- Tuesday, February 15, from 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. Getting Acquainted (UUSA 101)

Look for registration details and future dates in the Weekly Announcements. For more information, please email uusa-welcome@googlegroups.com

New Member Report On November 21, 2021, **Deeya Pavelle** signed our Membership Book in the sanctuary following a multi-platform service. Deeya is a longtime UU who moved to Amherst last summer. **John Gerber**, also of Amherst, had become a member in a virtual ceremony in January 2021. With the ancient tome now physically available, he was happy to add his signature to its pages as well!

Social Action



Not Bread Alone On **Saturday, January 29**, our help is again needed to provide lunch for community folks. Do you have a few hours you can give? Not Bread Alone (NBA), the soup kitchen at First Congregational Church in Amherst, follows health and safety protocols. Masks are required, temperatures and names are taken, and social distancing is maintained whenever possible. After lunch is made, food is packaged and distributed outside. We work under the direction of the experienced kitchen manager, who always looks for new recipes. We help in shifts. If you like to cook, please get there by 9:30 A.M. and stay until 12 P.M.; packers from 11:15 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.; “servers 11:45A.M. - 1:30 P.M.; cleaners 12:00 - 2:00 P.M. NBA is located in the lower rear of the church with access off the Spring Street parking lot. If you have questions or can help please contact **Mary Beth Seminario**.

Interfaith Shelter meals in Northampton Dear All, as you may know, from November through April, UUSA provides one meal per month on the First Thursday of the month to the people who stay at the Interfaith Shelter on Center Street in Northampton. Due to the pandemic, this service was interrupted, but now we are back in the swing of things. December 2, **Helen Blatz** delivered casseroles for 24 people, which **Carolyn Holstein** had prepared! Thanks to them both for taking care of that! We still have four more meals to go and we still need volunteers, especially for delivery.

Now, some of you are familiar with this process because you have participated and contributed in the past. But, some things have changed.

___ It is just UUSA members who provide each meal now [*UUSA and South Congregational Church in Amherst used to share meal duties for the first Thursday of the month*].

___ The shelter has moved to First Churches.

___ We just drop off. No other interaction.

__ It is for 24 people, plus a couple of employees.

__ To be provided: a main course, veg and/or salad, bread or other starch, dessert; four liters of non-caffeinated drinks. Vegetarian option is good. No appetizers or milk.

__ We can't use the kitchen at our meeting house. We have permission to use the fridge in classroom. TBA.

I have already signed up to provide lasagna on January 6, and **Janis Gray** will add a vegetarian version. I will also bring juice and bread, and **Polly Peterson** will provide dessert. If anybody wants to contribute a salad, that will be wonderful. **Sue Kelsey** is cooking the April meal. **Chas Stevenson** is providing something in March. Others have offered but not yet determined. If you have any questions please feel free to email or call me (if you do not have access to our UUSA directory, contact **Lea** in the office for my email address and/or phone number).

Have a serene and delicious holiday season!

In community,

Maria Lydia Spinelli

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will meet on Monday, January 10, at 7:15 P.M. on line.

Social Events

Weekly Men's Breakfast The Wednesday morning Men's Breakfast held at Kelly's is *postponed until future notice* due to the prevalence of the highly contagious COVID-19 Delta variant in Amherst.

The Women's Circle is a supportive and social group of UUSA women and open to all. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, January 13 at noon. We talked at our last (online) meeting about doing it in person on a member's covered patio, bundling up with the heater and a firepit. We will revisit this option closer to the time of the meeting.

Please contact **Sophie Rogers** for more information, or to get on the email distribution list. If you do not have access to our UUSA directory (with Sophie's contact information), please contact **Lea** in the office.

Congratulations to UUSA's Bob Romer on the release of his new book!

Bob Romer's latest work, *'I am a Bitter Enemy to Slavery' (An Amherst College Student Goes to War – Christopher Pennell (1842-1864))*, has just been published by Levellers Press, the same local publisher that published his 2009 book, *Slavery in the Connecticut Valley of Massachusetts*.

Bob writes that the title of his new book, with the subtitles, gives a pretty good idea of what the book is about. Christopher Pennell, an Amherst College student at the time of the Civil War, knew exactly what the war was about and served in the Union Army, receiving a commission as Second Lieutenant in one of the Black regiments that came to play such an important part in the Union victory.

But there was another person in this story – Sabra Snell. (Sabra's father was Ebenezer Snell, who taught natural philosophy (i.e., physics) at Amherst College for much of the 19th century and can be considered the intellectual father of **Ashley Carter** and **Bob Romer**, whom many Amherst UUs know well, and of the other members of today's Amherst College physics department.) Christopher had known (and "dated") Sabra while at Amherst, but when he asked Sabra's parents for permission to correspond with their daughter, permission was at first refused, but then belatedly granted a year later.

The result was that during the month of July, 1864, Christopher wrote frequent (and long) letters to Sabra. For the most part, his letters were devoted to expressions of undying love for Sabra, wishing that she would write more often, and hoping that she would unambiguously declare *her* love for *him*.

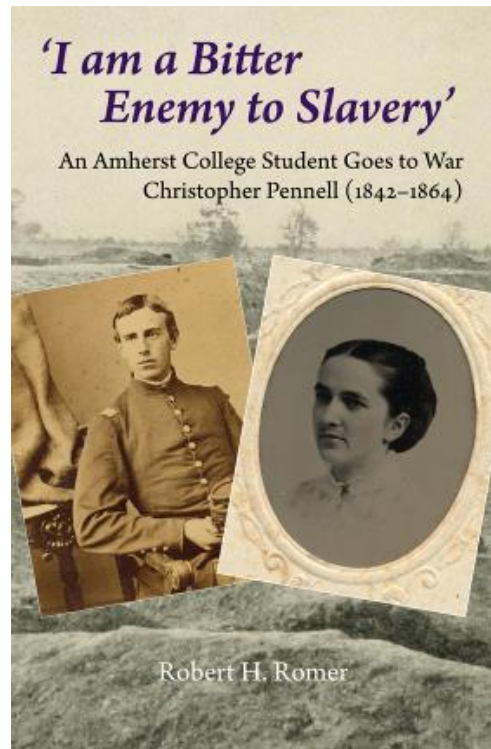
But he often found time to describe his interactions with his Black soldiers, to talk of troop movements (wartime correspondence was not censored), and to give his thoughts (very negative!) about the news that the new agricultural college ("Mass Aggie," eventually to become UMass Amherst) was to be located in Amherst, too close to the "sacred academic shades" of Amherst College.

We have in the college archives almost all of the letters that Christopher wrote to Sabra, including an unfinished letter that he was writing on the evening of July 29, 1864 when he was called away by his commanding officer.

Those were the last words that Christopher wrote. He was killed in action the next day in the Battle of the Crater at Petersburg, Virginia, a terrible defeat for the Union. His body was never recovered. Unfortunately, we have none of the letters that Sabra wrote to him. Perhaps he was carrying them “next to his heart” when he was killed.

Bob, noting the book is available at Amherst Books and also at Levellers Press, says, *BUY LOCAL. Please don't buy from Amazon, if possible.* (Levellers Press began as a spin-off from Amherst's Collective Copies, just down the street from Hastings.)

For more information, visit <https://www.levellerspress.com/product/i-am-a-bitter-enemy-to-slavery-an-amherst-college-student-goes-to-war/>



Our Caring Ministries



Help with at-home COVID tests! The Pastoral Care Team (PCT) would like to support any member that needs assistance getting an at-home COVID test. A team member would be pleased to bring a test kit to your location, assist with filling out the online registration, if needed, and return it to an appropriate location.

The availability of test kits is not guaranteed, but we will do our best to have a supply on hand with the assistance of the Amherst Health Department.

Phone **Fran Plumer** at home, or reach out to any other member of the PCT (more details below). If you do not have access to our UUSA directory, please contact **Lea** in the office. “You do not walk on your path alone.”



“Hope

Smiles from the threshold of the year to come,

Whispering ‘it will be happier’...”

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

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

Our Pastoral Care Team Coordinators are Fran Plumer and Rob Fuderich. Other members are the Rev. Elizabeth Alcaide, Charlie Atwood, 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 encouragement to those of you suffering from illness or loss, to those who are lonely or discouraged or facing hardship of any kind. You are part of our beloved community, and we are here to help. In these difficult times, with the pandemic raging around us, let us hold on to gratitude and hope and the knowledge that that we do not walk our path alone.

Denominational Affairs



The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations' annual meeting, General Assembly, will be a multiplatform event in 2022 (June 22-26), with registration options for in-person and/or virtual participation. In-person registration for GA 2022 in Portland, Oregon is open now at <https://www.uua.org/ga/registration>

Registration for Virtual participation will open March 1. Financial support for registration as well as a payment plan are available.

Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend; congregations must certify annually to have voting delegates.

ION Corner

On January 30, the Interfaith Opportunities Network (ION), of which UUSA is a member, is co-sponsoring (with Karuna Center and the Interfaith Council of Franklin County) the following interactive program on Right Relationship. As there are only 60 slots in this online program, interested people are encouraged to sign up soon. All participant donations (made on the Karuna website during registration) will go directly to Ohketeau Cultural Center and Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust.

An interactive workshop that will change the way you think about the land you call home.

Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change

TOWARD RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH NATIVE PEOPLES

LEARN
the root history of this country through the voices of Native Americans, Euro-American colonists, and historians

EXPERIENCE
this history as you never have before

UNDERSTAND
why this history matters to all Americans today

INTERACT
with Native and non-Native people to build relationships based on truth, respect, and justice

Online Workshop
Sunday, Jan 30, 3-5 pm ET
Sponsors:
Interfaith Opportunities Network
Interfaith Council of Franklin CO
Karuna Center for Peacebuilding
Register at:
karunacenter.org/Jan30

**This 2-hour participatory workshop is appropriate for high school students and adults.

FRIENDS PEACE TEAMS Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples

Learn more at www.friendspeaceteams.org/trr
Contact paula@palmer@gmail.com

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 January newsletters from 25 and 15 years ago:

January 1997

Library News Our office manager, Billie Bozone, recently received a letter from James L. Yarnall, Director of the La Farge Catalogue Raisonne Inc., thanking her for providing access to the sanctuary in order for him to photograph the La Farge windows (the three windows above the choir area). He enclosed a photocopy of a letter in the handwriting of John La Farge discussing the commission for these windows. The letter was addressed to Mary Rhoades of the Roxbury (MA) church, for which the windows were originally created. The letter will be added to the Society's archives. Anyone wishing to see these should ask **Marjorie Karlson** or **Luba Reep**.

January 2007

BOARD NEWS

December Board Meeting Highlights:

- Members of the new Long-Range Planning Committee attended the meeting to receive their charge. They will soon begin meeting to formulate their goals and ways of work. *[Editor's note, January 2022: The members of this committee would introduce themselves in the February newsletter as "**Glen Bertrand**, intrepid chairman; **George Sulzner**, elder statesman; **Bill Cooksy**, middle-aged statesman; and **Libby Stanforth**, stabilizing force." The work of this committee (and its future incarnations), including the input it gathered from many meetings of our congregation, would ultimately lead to the expansion of our building into the parking lot referenced below!]*
- The Board is considering how best to help those interested in making bequests to the UUSA.
- **Linda Callahan** (Chair) and several members of the Finance Committee discussed the operation of that committee with the Board. Among other things, mechanisms for budget development were discussed. A big Thank You to the Finance Committee, which does lots of behind-the-scenes work to keep the Society afloat!
- In the report from the Treasurer, we learned that we will be receiving payment in arrears from the Town of Amherst for increases in the rental fees for the parking lot behind the Meetinghouse. Good work, **Kurt [Gordon]**!
- The Board voted to be the sponsoring congregation for UUSA member **Erica Baron** as she pursues her studies toward UU ministry.

*Happy
New year*