

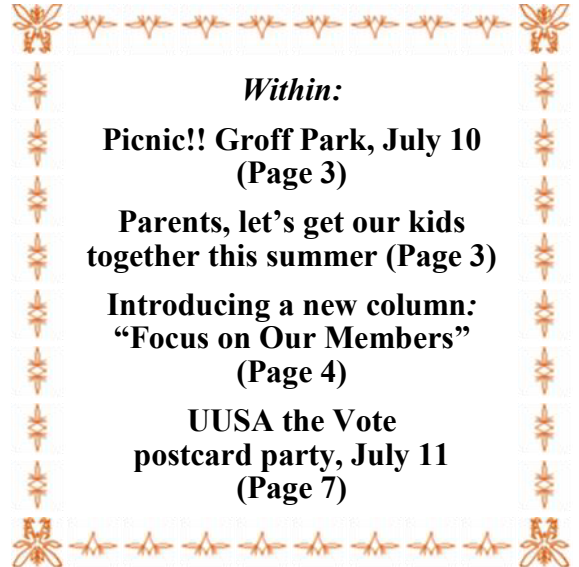
THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

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July 2022



Within:

**Picnic!! Groff Park, July 10
(Page 3)**

**Parents, let's get our kids
together this summer (Page 3)**

**Introducing a new column:
"Focus on Our Members"
(Page 4)**

**UUSA the Vote
postcard party, July 11
(Page 7)**

Important Information

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board@uusocietyamherst.org

[link to board minutes](#)

Co-Presidents:

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Treasurer:

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Deeya Pavelle

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!

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Schedule of Services

Our UU Society will not have Sunday Services this summer. But, you are welcome to be a virtual guest at UU services across the country! Below are links to services that Rev. Rachael encourages you to attend, and to websites for these congregations to tell you more about them. (Note times — not always at 10:30 A.M.!) Our own hybrid services will resume in Amherst in September. Save a small bit of water from a place in your life for our Water Ingathering Ritual on September 11.

Sunday, July 3, 10:30 A.M. – Service at May Memorial UU Society (Syracuse, NY): *We Hold These Truths to Be Self Evident*

To join this service online, click:

<https://zoom.us/j/97675097110?pwd=akYzbmpQRmNNbnBsSFV2WWFhVHNLUT09> Meeting ID: 976 7509 7110 Passcode: 992193 Dial by your location +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Website: <https://mmuus.org/>

Sunday, July 10, 10:30 A.M. – Service at The Unitarian Society (East Brunswick, NJ)

To join this service online, click: <https://zoom.us/j/904015815>.

Website: <https://www.unitariansociety.org/>

Afterward, head over to Groff Park in Amherst, MA, for our congregational picnic! See page 3.

Sunday, July 17, 10:00 A.M. – Service at First Parish (Concord, MA)

To join this service online, click: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RrURKQc9R0i6Eq33dVbf6A

Website: <https://firstparish.org/wp/>

Sunday, July 24, 10:00 A.M. – Service at First Unitarian Church (Rochester, NY)

To join this service online, click: <https://zoom.us/my/rochesterunitarian>

Website: <https://rochesterunitarian.org/>

Sunday, July 31, 11:00 A.M. – Service at Fourth Universalist Society (New York, NY)

To join this service online, click: <https://zoom.us/j/8972538131> Website: <https://4thu.org/>



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 from autumn through spring 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. This year, we chose to send **May's and June's Dedicated Offerings to Razom for Ukraine**. The combined amount raised for this timely cause was **\$1,850!** Thank you.

Social Events

Congregational Picnic — Sunday, July 10, rain or shine! The Pastoral Care Team invites you to a congregational picnic from noon—3:00 P.M. at Groff Park (83 Mill Lane, Amherst). Come enjoy a fun afternoon with your UUSA friends of all ages at Amherst's fabulous splash pad/water park.

If you wish to participate in a potluck, please bring the following dish along with serving utensils:

- A to G — Main dish
- H to M — Side dish/Salad
- N to Z — Dessert

Bring your own drinks. *(If you prefer, you're also welcome to bring your own lunch.)*

To take care of our environment, please bring your own plates and utensils. Recycling and composting will be available for a zero-waste event.

Kids, bring a bathing suit for "splash pad."

Meet **Andrew Coate**, the new Director of Religious Education, as he leads the children in games and activities.

Maura Whalen will bring her guitar.

There is a covered pavilion with tables. If possible, bring a camp chair or blanket; picnic tables are limited.

The Women's Circle is a supportive and social group of UUSA women and open to all. We are currently meeting at noon on the second Thursday of the month in person, and at noon on the fourth Thursday of the month online. 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.

The Men's Breakfast is a no-agenda group that meets each Wednesday at 7:00 A.M. at Kelly's Restaurant on Route 9 in Amherst. Please contact **Pete Rogers** for more information. If you do not have access to our UUSA directory (with Pete's contact information), please contact **Lea** in the office.

UU Women's Spiritual Practice

If you would like to be one of our popular UU Women's Spiritual Practice Groups, would you be interested in starting a new one? The existing groups, facilitated by **Jess Murphy**, are full, but she is aware of others who wish to join. Jess would be happy to help you get one going and offer her support along the way, if needed. She says it can be as easy as choosing a spiritual growth-oriented book and experiencing the chapters together over conversation. Email Jess for more information. (If you do not have access to our UUSA directory, please contact **Lea** in the office.)

Religious Education Ministry



A message from **Oliver (Ollie) MacFadden**, parent of **Jack**:

Dear Fellow RE Parents,

At our meetings this spring there had been some interest in getting together informally over the summer. This could take many shapes, depending on what people are looking for, but I was thinking of possibly meeting on Sunday mornings at 9:30 A.M. at Wildwood, like last summer, to keep it simple and to get the ball rolling.

Maybe this could be an opportunity to foster intergenerational connections if some other UUSA members want to volunteer to play with and/or monitor our children while our parent group meets. Or, maybe as parents we could take turns having one or two of us be with the children while the other parents meet. Please let me know if you're interested in some type of informal recurring gathering like this this summer, and I can try to put something together. I'm sure that family availability will vary from week to week, but I'll look forward to knowing I'll see some UUSA RE friends from time to time over the summer if we are able to set something up. Thanks!
Ollie

*[Editor's note: For the past few years, we have not published personal emails or phone numbers in this newsletter due to "phishing" attempts by outsiders reading the newsletter on our website. Please contact **Lea** in the office if you do not have access to our UU Society's directory and need Ollie's contact information.]*

***Jacy Armenti**, our Preschool RE Teacher, is shown here applauding our graduating Preschoolers during the service on June 12.*

Jacy was also applauded by our congregation that Sunday for completing a professional degree in 2021 in Special Education Research at Baypath College, and more recently for finishing her teaching licensure program in Special Education. Jacy is very excited to be able to add this new knowledge to her work at UUSA as well in other aspects of her career. Congratulations to Jacy! We are very proud of you.



What I Have Learned from Being a DRE at the UUSA On Sunday, June 12, we had a jam-packed service and I took a few minutes to talk about what I learned as DRE of the UUSA. Since we were having technical difficulties, I thought I should provide the text for those of you who were trying to watch the service on Zoom. I will be back in the pews in the fall and I look forward to becoming a "regular" member again. I hope everyone has a relaxing and safe summer.

Best,
Rebecca



When I first stepped into the UUSA, I had never been part of any sort of religious institution before. I can distinctly remember sitting looking up at my husband **Tom** (a former Lutheran) with a look that said, "You want me to do this every Sunday?" On our walk home, Tom explained that I shouldn't make any sort of judgment about the place until I had attended for six months. Six months later, we had become regular attendees. I was used to the hymns, the rhythm of the services, the length of the sermons and most importantly, I enjoyed being in community.



Now after seven years as your Director of Religious Education, I'm stepping back into the pews to be a regular member of this congregation. As DRE I've had the unique opportunity to work with the same people who drew me into this place, as well as many new families who have joined the UUSA and the RE program. I've also had the pleasure of working with four ministers, two office administrators, two music directors and **Jacy**, our most dedicated preschool teacher. So, what have I learned?

Every summer I would make a RE calendar similar to the Minister's calendar. This calendar reduces the year to a list of 42 Sunday dates and I can tell you, this process makes a year feel really short. It feels even shorter when you consider that those 42 days represent about 42 RE-with-children hours. Yes, as DRE I had about 42 hours a year to try to help children feel like they belong, that they matter,

that they can rely on the UUSA to help them seek their truth.

Since my time is short I thought I would summarize some of the things I have learned as DRE. Remember the Top 10 lists that were so popular not too long ago? Well, these are not in any particular order, but I promise that I will end with the best of the best of the best.

1. Ministers are people. As I said, I have worked with four in the past seven years, so I think I can tell you with some certainty, ministers are people. They have feelings just like the rest of us. They get tired, they get overwhelmed, but Ministers are caring and sharing people who LOVE to talk about the hard questions we all need to think about throughout our lives.
2. Our RE children often know more about what it means to be a UU than many adults who sit in the pews. They should be asked their opinions more often.
3. Multigenerational worship and events are precious. They make people feel good about themselves and being here.
4. The congregation generously supports RE, and has for as long as I can remember. But financial support is only one piece of the puzzle. Our families are our future. We need to make an effort to get to know these young children and parents even if, or especially because, they don't have time for committee work.
5. Just like habits are hard to break, it is hard to reimagine our traditions. And yet, our traditions need to adapt and change in order to be more welcoming. Remember, your comfort is not necessarily why we gather in this place. We should all be asking, who isn't in this sanctuary and why?
6. In the past two years we have learned it is important to prioritize. Our biggest challenge is to convince our members, our youth and our children, to fit the UUSA into their busy schedules.
7. Committees should consider themselves ministries. It is amazing how one word can shift a group's perspective on the work that needs to be done and also on how the work should be done.
8. Planning a Sunday service is one of the most meaningful activities you can do here in this place and for this place. The process of thinking about the music, the spoken words, creating space for silence and considering how to get the message of beloved community is incredibly meaningful.
9. Change is hard, but it can be exciting. Every week I met with **Rev. Rachael** and when we were finished with the nitty gritty details, we often discussed ways we could grow and push ourselves and a congregation. Most often we did not come to any conclusions, but we had fun spinning a web of ideas.

And finally, as promised, my most important take-away from my time as DRE? Be grateful. I am grateful for everyone who was here before me, with me and who will be in this place in the future. These past few years were hard, really hard, but here we are. Here I am. I'm so grateful for the time I have spent in this position, but I'm also grateful to be stepping away and making room for our new DRE's leadership. Thank you.

DRE Transition Covenant, June 12, 2022

Rev. Rachael - At this time of transition it is important to celebrate Rebecca's time as DRE and to welcome Andrew into the position of Director of Religious Education. Rebecca will not be leaving us, but she will be taking time to step back and allow space for Andrew and the congregation to connect and establish new ways of being together. As Minister, I promise to help Rebecca transition to life as a member of this congregation, and I promise to support Andrew's leadership as Director of Religious Education.

Rebecca - I promise to have firm boundaries. For two years I will not participate in any committee work and I will not talk about anything related to the religious education program. I will direct all questions and comments to Andrew and the RE Ministry.

Board Co-President Susan Rice - Would the congregation speak the next part with me: We, the congregation of the UUSA, promise to respect Rebecca and Andrew's new roles. We will allow Rebecca to find her seat in the pews without any further responsibilities for two years and we will support Andrew's leadership as the new Director of Religious Education.

Andrew - I joyfully take on the role of Director of Religious Education at the UUSA.



Following the ceremony, Rebecca presented Andrew Coate with a red paper key which had been decorated by our RE students that morning. "This is a very big key," she said, "but it opens a lot of doors here."

Gardening, Anyone?



This summer, Master Gardener (and UUSA member) **Sue Kelsey** plans to tend the gardens outside our Meetinghouse on **the first and third Saturdays of the month from 3:00-5:00 P.M.** Fellow gardeners are most welcome to join her! If you would like to garden regularly on your own schedule, contact Sue by email or phone, and she will fill you in with what needs to be done.

*(Please contact **Lea** in the office if you do not have access to our UU Society's directory and need Sue's contact information.)*

Focus on Our Members

Catharine Porter (CP) is an Amherst resident who retired from UMass where she served as ombudsperson. She was interviewed by **Ellen Pile** (EP). We look forward to more interviews by Ellen in the months to come!

EP: What drew you to UUSA?

CP: When I retired, I realized almost immediately I needed a community. I had driven by that meeting house thousands of times and always wondered what went on inside. One Sunday I said, "I'm going to go into that building." I was filled with trepidation because I didn't know who was in there and what they did. Then I saw people that I recognized. I said, "Well these people are like me." Then at the end everybody stood up and held hands and sang. Although I thought, "Oh boy this might not be for me," I came back and I would say ending in the circle became the most powerful experience. Looking around and seeing all sorts of people, a mix of society, genuine and not trying to put on airs, just captured me. To me the important word is community. There's a spiritual component to UUSA, but it's a practical kind of spirit that resonates and makes sense. I always left services feeling good and reinforced with the presence of so many nice people. That's the community piece. We're here for one another.



Catharine Porter

EP: When did you first feel you were a part of the community?

CP: The first year I was wandering around, trying to find something that appealed to me immediately, and it was the social hour. I think after a year I felt integrated. I incorporated faster than others because I was asked, and I volunteered. If you're not invited, pretty soon you may never feel like you're a member. It's the projects that get people involved, like clearing up the river or working on a fundraiser. I think that's when people feel like they're contributing and are part of something. I'd be willing to bet that the majority of people — nobody asks them to do anything. I may be wrong, they find a committee, but I think that's key to people feeling they have ownership.

EP: You coordinate the Caring Circle. How does that work?

CP: Although we try at least once a year to remind people that we're their contact, they forget. Most of the calls are not from the person who needs the help but from somebody who heard that person might need help. I'll have to say the UUs are a stalwart, independent group. When COVID hit, we thought that we would be swamped with calls. We did have a flurry, but it wasn't a problem. I'm proud to say we have this part of UUSA.

EP: What do you get out of being involved?

CP: I heard about this Caring Circle thing because of people making meals. So, I asked someone how do I get in? I had to ask several times. I wondered if it was some special honor. Which it's not. I like the idea of being able to reach out and help. I think we all do when there is a need for basics. It's important especially in this day and age when there are so many people who don't have families. Maybe I'm thinking about myself because I live alone and my kids are in California. To think we might be able to provide that service is wonderful.



Not Bread Alone (NBA) - On Saturday, July 30, our Society is responsible for helping provide lunch at this local soup kitchen. Meals are packaged inside and distributed outside, where people eat. We work in shifts: cooking 9:30 A.M. -12:00 P.M.; packaging 11:15 A.M.—12:30 P.M.; distributing 11:50 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. NBA is located in the lower rear of First Congregational Church, with access off Spring St. (Amherst). If you can give a few hours, please contact **Mary Beth Seminario**. THANK YOU! *(Please contact **Lea** in the office if you do not have access to our UU Society's directory and need Mary Beth's contact information.)*

UUSA the Vote We have begun our next postcard campaign with Reclaim Our Vote to fight voter suppression. These postcards to voters of color in Florida should not be sent out until early August, so that gives us plenty of time to get them written. You can write them at home, or **come to a postcard party** in a member's yard! This gives us a chance to do some activism *and* connect socially with each other this summer.

The next scheduled party is **Monday, July 11**, from 10:00 A.M. to noon at the home of Jeanne Ballantine in Amherst. Space is limited, so please RSVP to **Anne Louise White**. *(Please contact **Lea** in the office if you do not have access to our UU Society's directory and need Anne Louise's contact information.)* We will provide postcards, scripts, stamps and addresses. We ask that you bring your own folding chair if you are able, and money to cover the cost of your stamps. We will provide some drinks and light snacks, but are inviting you to bring some snacks as well.

Below: We had a great time at our June postcard party!



Our Caring Ministries



“I long to accomplish great and noble tasks, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble.”

Helen Keller

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 **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.

If you are lonely, grieving, or ill, know that we hold you in our hearts. You are not alone. The pandemic has made it hard for the congregation to feel as close as in the past, but we look forward to the time when we can truly be together again.

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 Summer newsletters from 25 and 15 years ago
(we did not have separate July and August editions back then).

Summer 1997

M.O.M.S. don't get summers off Mothers Offering Mutual Support (M.O.M.S.) will continue to meet informally over the summer. Its members encourage other mothers to join them! Some events involve kids, some do not, but all have created valuable friendships. Anyone interested in being on the phone list for potlucks and other activities may call **Brenda Ewing, Perry Conley, Marianne Lorenzelli, or Darcy DuMont**.

Breakfast in the Undercroft The Men's Summer Breakfast will make its appearance Sunday, July 27, and Sunday, August 31. The breakfasts will be prepared by the men and are open to all members and friends. The meals get underway at 9:00 A.M. There will be lotteries for a children's prize and an adult's prize. See you there!

Summer 2007

Religious education It's a busy season. The sun slowly crosses the sky, the crickets sing, the flowers bloom and the waters teem with creatures of all shapes and sizes. I am busy writing RE curriculum for this coming fall, rearranging the basement with the Family Center, speaking with **Alison** [Alison Wohler, our minister at the time], the youth leaders and of course working with the RE committee to organize a great year to come.

Good news! Alison has arranged to be downstairs several times throughout the year. She will lead the children's service and get to know the children even better. We are looking forward to her services and would like to thank the Sunday Services Committee for helping her "sneak" down to us.

On September 9, during our first service, we will have a water communion at which we will be sharing water from special places we have visited over the summer. For those who do forget - never fear - we will have symbolic water for you to pour into the community pitcher.

Open your mind, share the love in your heart and put your hands to work!

Rebecca Fricke

Interim DRE

