

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

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October 2022



Important Information

STREET ADDRESS:

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The following staff can be reached by email or by calling the office and leaving a message: 413-253-2848

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revrachael@uusocietyamherst.org

CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR:

Lea Douville office@uusocietyamherst.org

Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday 11:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Andrew Coate dre@uusocietyamherst.org

Office Hours: Wednesday 9:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.,

Sunday 10:00—Noon, evenings as requested

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT COORDINATOR:

Cauli Williams youthandya@uusocietyamherst.org

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC:

Brenda Miller music@uusocietyamherst.org

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

board@uusocietyamherst.org

[link to board minutes](#)

Co-Presidents:

John Gerber and Anne Moore

Clerk:

Louise Grosslein

Treasurer:

Eric Murphy

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



Members At Large:

Carolyn Cave

Sue Kelly

Deeya Pavelle

Schedule of Services

Our services are still hybrid at this time. To join our UU Society of Amherst services online, click: <https://bit.ly/3eGKxFj> Meeting ID: 998 3789 9241 PW: 432607 Or call in +1 646 876 9923 and enter Meeting ID: 998 3789 9241

Sunday, October 2, 10:30 A.M. – *Days of Awe: Forgiving Sarah*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, October 9, 10:30 A.M. – *Indigenous Peoples' Day: Grandmother Maple and the Good Dirt*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, October 16, 10:00 A.M. [Note earlier time!] *Love the Hell out of this World*

Matt Meyer

Joint service with the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence (in person in the UNSF sanctuary; watch our weekly announcements for how to join the service online).)

When the culture around us doesn't encourage us to our best selves, how do we model the kind of world we want to live in? Matt will reflect on the good and bad of middle school, the time he picked the very best costume for a high-stakes 5th grade costume party, and how we find the path to beloved community.

Matt is a musician and worship leader who has led hundreds of services for UU congregations across the country. He has a degree in hand drumming and serves as Director of Community Life for Sanctuary Boston.

This service will be followed at 1 P.M. at the UU Society of Amherst by a drumming workshop led by Matt. See page 4.

Sunday, October 24 10:30 A.M. – *Service title to be determined*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, October 30, 10:30 A.M. – *Ancestor Lights*

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

From September through June, our Unitarian Universalist Society devotes each month to a new Dedicated Offering (DO) recipient and splits every Sunday's offering plate 50/50 with the recipient organization.

Our September offerings were for Letcher County in eastern Kentucky. Donations are still coming in. We will share the total in a future newsletter.

The October Dedicated Offerings will benefit **Hospice of the Fisher Home**. The Fisher Home is such a wonderful resource, many here have had personal experience with it. They provide hospice care for those who stay in their homes, and those at the homelike environment of the hospice residence, as well as bereavement support groups after the loss of a loved one.

Kate Hart, the Spiritual Counselor at Fisher Home who spoke at our Sunday service on June 19. will return on October 23 to tell us more about their important work.

A Message from the Co-Presidents

Dear Beloved UUSA Community,

Our 2022-23 UUSA worship year has begun. While we might hope the coming year will be different than the past few years, we really don't know how it will unfold. Optimism has been undermined by wave after wave of personal, environmental, and societal trauma. The pandemic continues, ceaseless weather extremes remind us of our vulnerability to climate change, social unraveling in the form of gender exclusion, classism, religious intolerance, gun violence, and the loss of trust in institutions grows.

The pandemic drove us online where we may feel safe. It would be easy to continue to isolate, to hang back, to be cautious, perhaps to give in to fear. While some of us are suspicious of anything that sounds "religious," remember the Latin word *religare* means "to bind together." Perhaps the only rational reaction to our current situation is to bind together as a people of many beliefs but with the shared faith that we are better off together. We need each other. We need to "show up" for each other . . . especially now, when we are all wounded in some way.

UUs are not strangers to the experience of being wounded. Many of us came here looking for a place where we could heal from the pain inflicted by religion itself, religions that were intolerant of difference. In some religions, "to bind together" means to wall ourselves off from "the other," from anyone who seems different. Like being online, exclusion may feel like a safe response to fear, but it never works. We must turn toward one another, not away. As Joanna Macy reminds us, we must open ourselves to compassion (our Second Principle) and the radical interconnectedness of all things (our Seventh Principle).

As we begin our worship year, we are each invited to turn towards one another by joining a UUSA small group, a committee, a ministry, or just showing up for a UUSA activity or event like a book group or social hour after our service. It would be easy to "wait until the pandemic is over," but if we don't "congregate" . . . we won't have a congregation. Gathering online, of course, will continue to be an option for those of us who are vulnerable, traveling, or unable to ambulate. And we certainly want to take precautions, to wear masks, to maintain our vaccinations, to test ourselves when we are not feeling well — but we cannot afford to be isolated any longer.

We have all been wounded by illness, by loss, by trauma, by fear. There is no healing in isolation. We need to "bind together" in the connectivity afforded by our congregation, our principles, and our weekly services. Please join us in healing from the woundedness of living . . . together.

In community . . .

Anne and John

Religious Education Ministry



Religious Education has gotten off to a wonderful start this year. Here's a little about what we're doing this fall. Our youngest children will be learning through play with **Jacy**. They will explore the seasons and holidays with all their senses, like making apple cinnamon play dough to celebrate both Rosh Hashanah and the autumnal equinox (sometimes called Mabon), and learn about the UU principles each week.

The elementary age group will be focusing on the sources of Unitarian Universalism. We started in September by getting to know each other, looking through the Sources books we made together, and coming up with our own RE covenant. In the coming weeks we will be looking more at what each source means through games, stories, and possibly even some field trips.

For our middle school youth, we're doing an amazing collaborative project with the middle school youth at the congregation in Northampton/Florence. Crossing Paths is an updated version of the much beloved Neighboring Faiths curriculum. We will meet at our respective congregations online three Sundays a month and join together in person to visit different services and organizations from different faith traditions once a month.

Youth Group had a successful first meeting of the year on September 11 at the Unitarian Society of Northampton & Florence. They played classic games like A Wind Blows and Apples to Apples. Youth also had a chance to meet their newest adviser, **Emma Livingston** (they/them). They were excited to have Emma join them again for a hike at Mt. Pollux in Amherst on Sunday, September 25. Also, note that the Youth Group will be meeting twice a month this year rather than weekly.

The Young Adult program kicked off on Saturday, September 24 at the Unitarian Society of Northampton & Florence. They will be meeting monthly on second Saturdays from 3-4:30 P.M. starting in October. Young Adults UUs (18-30) and UU adjacent folks from our local congregations and those unaffiliated with a congregation are welcome to attend. You can email Cauli at youthandya@uusocietyamherst.org for more details or to get on the listserv.

We can always use volunteers both on Sunday mornings and at other times during the week. Please email Andrew at dre@uusocietyamherst.org if you're interested in hearing more.

Sunday, October 16, 1—2:30 P.M. Workshop at UUSA: Drumming and Spirituality

A chance for people of all skill levels to participate in hands on rhythm-making. Led by Matt Meyer, we'll tour instruments from around the world and experience the connection of community music-making through different activities, stories, and discussions. We'll also look at how rhythm and music intersect with Unitarian Universalist values. Bring your own drum if you have one. For those who don't, enough will be provided. RSVP here: <https://forms.gle/5LDHcbKW2bhcZHRHA>

UUSA Book Discussions to begin!!

By Naomi Yanis

This will NOT be a book group. You don't have to join a group, or make a commitment. There will be a discussion approximately once a month, and sign up for as many or as few as you wish to attend. The choice of online or in-person will be up to each facilitator, as will the date and time of each discussion.

The first will be online on Thursday, October 27, at 7 P.M. The wonderful novella is **A Psalm for the Wild-Built** by Becky Chambers, which Rev. Rachael spoke of enthusiastically at the September 18 service. While it is sci-fi, which I haven't read since the 1950's, I found it extremely readable, short, and full of great philosophy, which should make for great discussion. It looks at a future that is optimistic and hopeful, where situations arise from abundance instead of scarcity. A robot, arriving unexpectedly, cannot leave until the question of "What do people need?" is answered. But the answer to that question depends on who you ask, and how.



Sign up by emailing me [contact Lea in the office if you do not have access to our directory and need Naomi's email address].

The discussion this time will be facilitated by **Emma Livingston**, who will send a link to the virtual session to those who sign up. Please use they/them pronouns when referring to Emma, as those are the pronouns they use, just as the protagonist does in our book.

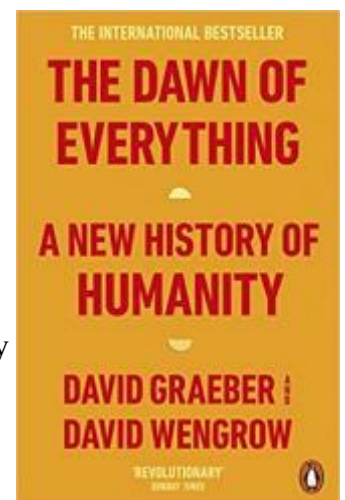
This will be the first of a series, each facilitated by a different person. For those who may want to get started reading, here is a peek at upcoming discussions.

The second discussion will be on the **FIRST TWO CHAPTERS ONLY** of **The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity**. It will be held online some time after Thanksgiving.

In January we will have a discussion of **Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation** by Paul Hawken.

You need only sign up for those that interest you. They will each be independent discussions; this is not a book group.

If you have a book you'd like to discuss with a group of UUs, let me know. **We'd like to have discussions in February, March, and April** as well (by May too many of us are spending our time outdoors), so there aren't that many opportunities. Let me know soon!



Coming Soon: Cottage Meetings Hosted by the Leadership Development Committee

The UUSA Leadership Development Committee is creating opportunities for members and friends of the congregation to attend small group discussions called cottage meetings. As we emerge from more than two years of limited connection, we hope these small gatherings will provide a space to dialogue about our individual spiritual relationships with UUSA. The global pandemic has impacted our community in myriad ways, including how we gather, how we interact with one another, and how we as a congregation manifest our shared values.

The Cottage Meetings will provide an opportunity for us to reflect on what we want from this spiritual community and to acknowledge our collective gifts. This will be a space where everyone can share and listen with open hearts and minds as we look to reconnect with our beloved community.

Meetings are planned for late October and early November to accommodate individual schedules. A list of the dates is forthcoming. Please sign up! Both in-person and online meetings will be offered. Some meetings will provide childcare.

Susan Rice, Sue Alexander and Lauren Croce

Social Action



Not Bread Alone On Saturday, October 29, our Society's help is needed at Not Bread Alone, the soup kitchen at First Congregational Church in Amherst, to create a delicious multi-course lunch. Using whatever ingredients are available that day, volunteers make tasty appetizers, soups, main courses and dessert to share with community people. There is no indoor dining. We work in shifts. Cooks 9 A.M.-12 P.M.; assemblers 11:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.; Distributors 12-1 P.M.; clean-up 12-2 P.M. Not Bread Alone is located in the rear/lower level of the church with access off the Spring St, parking lot. If you can help, please email **Mary Beth Seminario** [contact Lea in the office if you do not have access to our directory and need **Mary Beth's** email address].

Seeking UUSA Meal Team for the Interfaith Cot Shelter Every year, from November to April, area houses of worship coordinate to provide meals for an Interfaith Cot Shelter for homeless people on Center Street, now a part of First Churches in Northampton. Our own meal team has provided a meal for the residents on the first Thursday of the month. **On November 3, 2022, we are planning for 15 guests**, although the number is expected to increase.

Covid-19 continues to cause changes, so although this meal has been a tradition for many years, last year it was kind of a balancing act, and members of our meal team stepped up to fill in gaps and make sure that a yummy nutritious meal was assembled and delivered to the right place, at the right time, in sufficient quantities. The number of diners, locations and provisions kept on changing on us, but the coordinators kept us informed till the last minute and as usual, all went well in the end, and it gave us a chance to talk to each other. **Karen Mack** created a nice spread sheet which we hope we can reactivate this year, now that things are a bit more stable... although... don't be too sure. Many members of our UU community have participated, donated, coordinated, cooked and served over the years. We used to have to serve and clean up but that is no longer necessary.

Dates this season: November 3, December 1, January 5, February 2, March 2, April 6

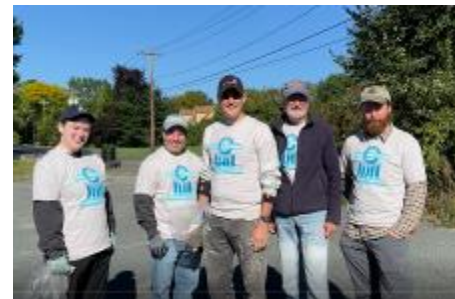
We need VOLUNTEERS to cook a meal, prepare vegetables or salad, donate, pick up and deliver.

- Main Course (usually a casserole or two... two members can cook)
- Vegetable and or Salad (These people really love the salad!)
- Dessert
- Juice or another non-caffeinated or non-alcoholic beverage
- Bread \
- Pick up and delivery

Please email or call **Maria Lydia Spinelli** if you want to contribute or if you have any questions [Lea in our office can give you **Maria Lydia's** contact information if you do not have access to our directory.]

Green Sanctuary

Many thanks to the all the UUSA volunteers who turned out to help the Fort River Watershed Association as part of the Connecticut River Conservancy's 26th Annual Source to Sea Cleanup on September 24. Shown here are Emma, Jeff, Tom, a second Jeff (!) and Mason. Shortly after a passerby took this photo, Maura arrived to join their crew.



Social Events

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 and fourth Thursdays of the month, sometimes in person, sometimes online, Please contact **Sophie Rogers** for more information, or to get on her 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.

Finance Committee

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

Our Caring Ministries



“Age brings diminishment, but more than a few come with benefits. I’ve lost the capacity for multitasking, but I’ve discovered the joy of doing one thing at a time. My thinking has slowed a bit, but experience has made it deeper and richer. I’m done with big and complex projects, but more aware of the loveliness of simple things: a talk with a friend, a walk in the woods, sunsets and sunrises, a night of good sleep.

I have fears, of course...But as time lengthens like a shadow behind me, and the time ahead dwindles, my overriding feeling is gratitude for the gift of life.”

Parker Palmer

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, Sophie Hermann, 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, and Pete Rogers.** Please contact one of them for more complex or personal needs.

We wish you comfort in times of sorrow, strength when the going is rough, and hope for the future. Above all we wish you peace.

ION Corner

The Interfaith Opportunities Network (ION) had its first in-person meeting with a simultaneous online connection since the pandemic started. After initial awkward moments of not recognizing people beneath the masks, we had a very full agenda. That day was International Day of Peace. We reflected on what that meant

and what building a world in which all people are treated equally, regardless of race, sexuality and disability would require.

Our meeting took place at Center Church in South Hadley, which is hosting “Voices of Resilience,” which includes stories of women whose diverse lives change the course of history. The exhibit runs through October 15, Saturday 10-1 P.M., Sunday 11-2 P.M., and Wednesday 4-7 P.M. Group visits available at other times by appointment. For more info: voicescenterchurch@gmail.com.

Mary Beth Seminario, UUSA ION representative

Focus on Our Members

(Continued from Ellen’s interview in September)

Jeanne Ballantine (JB) taught Sociology and Global Studies; **Hardy Ballantine** (HB) was the family homemaker, an educator and bookbinder. They live in Amherst and were interviewed by **Ellen Pile** (EP).

EP: *When you arrived in Amherst how did you connect with UUSA?*

HB: We went to a couple of services, and I joined the choir. Jeanne was received with open arms by various committees.

JB: **Pat Rector**, **Catharine Porter** and I started a committee. We just said how do we engage people during social hour? How do we ensure everybody, especially new people, have someone to talk to? I got involved that way. Hardy had the choir and joined the men’s group.

EP: *Did you ever find an answer to the question of engaging people during social hour?*

We worked on it; there were some good, concrete ideas. One was that there would be people whose job it was to talk to someone who was standing there alone or someone new. They would find out what that person was interested in and say oh you should talk to... So the person would meet a couple of people. I think from our own experiences we thought that would be useful and helpful. And then Covid came along, and it was irrelevant.

EP: *What was your experience with the Stewardship Committee?*

Catharine Porter, Elliot Kelly, and I and one or two other people started the Stewardship Committee. I had headed the pledge drive. I suggested it would be good to have a yearlong fundraising plan. Right now, that committee is on hiatus because we can’t plan anything and the couple of things that we’ve suggested might be fun to do were kind of nixed because again it would’ve been better to do them in person. The committee also developed a legacy program that’s in place and that hasn’t gotten as much press as it needs. It’s the idea of leaving a gift to UUSA when you die. That’s in place and several people have taken advantage of it but I don’t think it’s known enough.

EP: *Hardy, did the Men’s Breakfast group exist before you joined?*

HB: Wednesday breakfast at Kelly’s Restaurant is probably the oldest and that’s about a half dozen gentlemen meeting for breakfast. And then during the pandemic everybody was feeling very much shut in and our covered patio was here [at the Ballantines’ home]. We had these glorified shower curtains around to cut the wind down and we started meeting there on Friday evening for whatever anybody wanted to drink. So that’s been going on for a couple of years now.

EP: *The Women’s Circle also uses your patio. That group used meet for a restaurant lunch.*

JB: I went to many of those. I think it’s a wonderful place for people



Hardy and Jeanne Ballantine

who are newer to the congregation and want to meet people and have a group they can share ideas with. I think it's been very difficult during Covid not meeting in person. I'm looking forward to when we can get together more. Our patio is there, and we love sharing it. Having it there is great but there are still some people who can't make it here physically or feel uncomfortable in a group. We've had anything from 10 people to three.

EP: *Your patio has been an asset for the whole congregation; your hospitality is spectacular.*

JB: Well, thank you. But it's our pleasure. We love to share.

HB: The nice thing about it is a dozen people can sit around the table out there and you can talk back and forth and carry on a conversation with somebody down at the other end, whereas in a restaurant it's harder.

JB: I should tell you how this came about when we moved here six years ago. There was this plastic thing that leaked, and we knew we had to get rid of that. We asked a person who had already done some work here for his suggestions. He said he could just put a covering over it to make it a little more solid. Well as we watched this thing going up . . .

HB: . . . It was a whole lot bigger.

JB: It turned out to be this huge thing, and we said. "Oh my God, this could be another house." I don't want to say we were appalled, but we didn't see what we needed this for. And now we know. We're so glad.

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 September newsletters from 25 and 15 years ago.

October 1997

Social Justice At its meeting September 5, the Committee reached a consensus that the Society should continue to support The Amherst Survival Center, Not Bread Alone, Shelter Sunday, the Emergency Cot Program [now the Interfaith Cot Shelter — Ed.], and "Guest at Your Table."

The Survival Center provides food and clothing five days a week; Not Bread Alone serves lunch at the First Congregational Church on Saturdays and Sundays; Shelter Sunday is an annual one-day fundraiser for organizations serving the hungry and homeless; the Emergency Cot Program provides overnight shelter for the homeless in Northampton; and "Guest at Your Table" is an annual Unitarian Universalist Service Committee fundraiser, running from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day.

The Committee also recommended that the Board approve the Society's co-sponsorship of the October 8 meeting on "Getting Money Out of Politics" at The Jones Library.

Chad Johnson

October 2007

Association Sunday, October 14 Plan now to be at the service on Sunday, October 14, when we will join with thousands of Unitarian Universalists across the nation celebrating our shared commitment on Association Sunday.

In this service, we will strengthen the bonds of our common purpose and combine our resources to make Unitarian Universalism the voice of liberal religious values in our country. We are better together. We increase our spirit and influence. We honor the "inherent worth and dignity of every person." Our values are needed to help heal the wounded world. We will be taking a special collection for the growth and vitality of our congregations.

Funds raised will be used for a national campaign called *Now is the Time - A Campaign to Grow Our Faith*, which will fund national advertising for Unitarian Universalism, and grants to congregations for growth

outreach projects as well as congregations working with ministers of color.

Some see this as a moment of opportunity to broaden the liberating message of religious freedom. Others see it as a crucial turning point as a wounded world cries out for the commitment to justice, freedom, and equality inherent in our religious values. Now is the time to raise funds and spend them strategically to strengthen our movement. \

There are five interdependent goals to this campaign: to grow our numbers, to grow our diversity, to strengthen our witness, to support our leadership, and to nurture our spirit through inspiring and transforming worship. Now is the time for a comprehensive fundraising campaign that boldly asks Unitarian Universalists what they need to thrive, what they want to support, and how projects and programs should be shaped.

On Association Sunday, the UUA is asking us to expand their efforts by:

- *Making a financial contribution
- *Spreading the word to other UUs
- *Sharing our dreams, ideas and proposals

To help continue the conversation, please email campaign@uua.org or call 888-792-5885 and ask for a member of the campaign team.

It is hoped that each person will contribute as generously as they are able. If you will not be able to attend the service on October 14, but would like to contribute to this UUA campaign, please use the enclosed envelope to send in your check.

Now is the Time!

Alison [The Rev. Alison Wohler, minister at UUSA 2005-2016, now *Minister Emerita* — Ed.]