

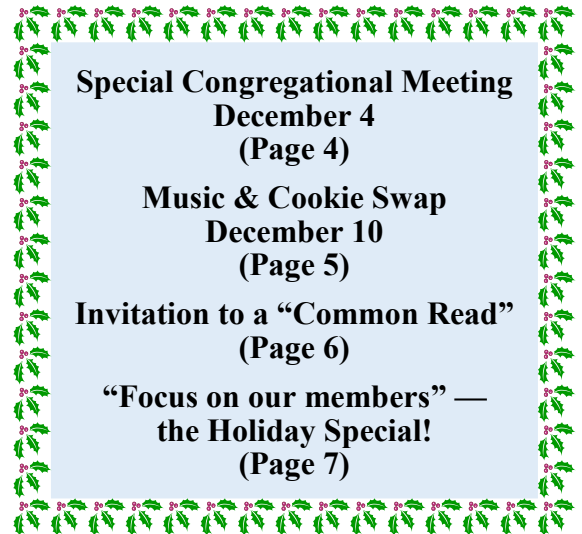
# THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**December 2022**



## Important Information

### **STREET ADDRESS:**

121 North Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA 01002

### **MAILING ADDRESS:**

P.O. Box 502, Amherst, MA 01004-0502

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

**MINISTER: The Reverend Rachael Hayes**

[revrachael@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:revrachael@uusocietyamherst.org)

**CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR:**

Lea Douville [office@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:office@uusocietyamherst.org)

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

**DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**

Andrew Coate [dre@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto: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:**

Collee Williams [youthandya@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:youthandya@uusocietyamherst.org)

**DIRECTOR OF MUSIC:**

Brenda Miller [music@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:music@uusocietyamherst.org)

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

[board@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:board@uusocietyamherst.org)

[link to board minutes](#)

**Co-Presidents:**

John Gerber and Anne Moore

**Clerk:**

Louise Grosslein

**Treasurer:**

Eric Murphy

**Members At Large:**

Carolyn Cave

Sue Kelly

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. Submissions may be edited to save space or to maintain a consistent style.

Thank you!

Printed on recycled paper



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## Schedule of Services

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We encourage you to join us for worship in our sanctuary, understanding that we still wear high-quality masks when we are indoors together. The COVID risk level in Hampshire County may be low, but we recognize that we are a community with many risk levels. You are also welcome to attend services online. Just 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, December 4, 10:30 A.M. – *Wanderers and Worshipers***  
**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

**Sunday, December 11, 10:30 A.M. – *Lessons from Gate A4***  
**The Rev. Rachael Hayes with Staff from the UUA**

**Friday, December 16, 6:00 P.M. – *Winter Solstice***  
**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

**Sunday, December 18, 10:30 A.M. – *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins***  
**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

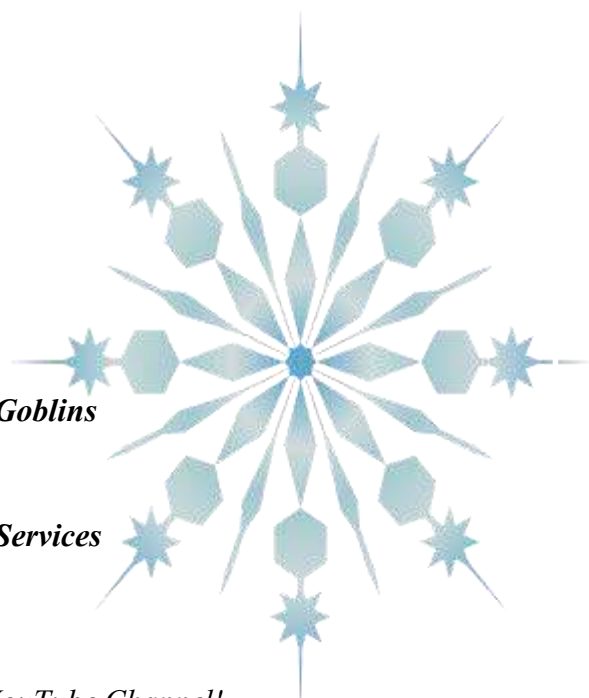
**Saturday, December 24, 4:00 P.M. & 7:00 P.M. – *Christmas Eve Services***  
**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

**Sunday, December 25 – *Christmas Day***  
*UUSA will not have a live service this morning. Instead, visit our YouTube Channel!*

**Sunday, January 1, 2023, 10:30 A.M. – *Embracing Possibility in Times of Change***  
*This pre-recorded service will be online only.*

### **Yes, we have a UUSA YouTube Channel!**

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



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## Dedicated Offerings

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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.

In September, we raised \$1,025 for **Letcher County** in eastern Kentucky We will report in a future newsletter the totals from our October and November offerings (**Hospice of the Fisher Home** and the **Abortion Rights Fund of Western Massachusetts**.)

The December Dedicated Offerings from the UUSA will be for the **Amherst Survival Center**. The Amherst Survival Center provides a welcoming community where families and individuals can come for food and access to other resources. The Center serves more than 6,000 people each year. All their services are free, including a food pantry, meals, a warming center with computers, showers, laundry, and lockers for those experiencing homelessness. There are no eligibility requirements to come to the Amherst Survival Center. All are welcome.

Please donate to support the Survival Center. Financial contributions give the Center the flexibility to respond as needs change. Please give generously. Thank you so much for sharing what you can.

In the years when this newsletter came into our homes by snail mail, it often included *brief tidings* about births, graduations, weddings, new jobs, or other significant events in our members' lives. Sharings such as these can strengthen our sense of community. Once we began posting the newsletter on our website, however, privacy concerns ended this practice.

UUSA's Communication Team has agreed to try it again. If you have something you'd like to see mentioned in a future newsletter, send note to **Janis Gray** — with the knowledge that it will be accessible to the public. (Reach out to **Lea** in the office if you do not have Janis's contact information.)



Spotted recently on the bridge of the Starship UUSA were **Kyle Cave** (left) and **Emma Livingston** (right), two members of our stellar and stalwart Zoom tech team. Others on the crew's rotation are **John Gerber**, **Elliott Kelly**, **Bo Mack** and **Steve Rice**. Thank you for boldly bringing our virtual (and now hybrid) services through endless anomalies and the occasional black hole!

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## A Message from the Co-Presidents

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To the UUSA members and friends.

We would like to thank our Eighth Principle Ambassadors, **Naomi Yanis**, **Ellen Pile**, and **MaryBeth Seminario**, for their good work helping our congregation study and adopt the Eighth Principle of Unitarian Universalism. Having completed their work, they have announced their “retirement” as a group, but pledge to work in other ways to help our congregation actualize the Eighth Principle in everything we do as Unitarian Universalists.

As you know, our congregation voted to adopt the Eighth Principle in June 2021. Upon request of the Board, the Ambassadors continued their work for another year by offering short and uplifting thoughts each week in the UUSA announcements, with the goal of encouraging dialogue and reflection among the members and friends of the congregation. In their retirement letter, they stated, “*We now feel that we have fulfilled our original intent, and are ready to retire, with the hope that others will take up the ideas the congregation has committed to*” when we voted to adopt the Eighth Principle. It is now the responsibility of all of us to reflect upon and creatively propose ways we can all continue to embody the Eighth Principle in the work and life of the congregation. Upon receiving the “retirement” letter from the Ambassadors, we proposed the following

three-step process to the Board.

1. Thank the Eighth Principle Ambassadors and celebrate their work, their leadership, and their continued efforts to make the adoption of the Eighth Principle a meaningful experience for the congregation.
2. Recognize that the conversation around the Eighth Principle has changed to one that is embedded in all aspects of our work and not a separate committee function, or activity.
3. Develop plans for the next phase of Eighth Principle work including:
  - a) Inventory and celebrate the things we are currently doing consistent with the Eighth Principle.
  - b) Facilitate the initiation of new projects and actions consistent with the Eighth Principle that have the support of the congregation.

The Board of Trustees, at the November meeting, affirmed our commitment to several activities that are currently underway. We agreed to build out and inventory all the many actions we are doing at present, consistent with the Eighth Principle, and make these more visible to the congregation and wider community. This will be a topic of conversation at the next UUSA Department meeting including the leaders of committees and ministries scheduled for January 12, 2023.

We will also sponsor a congregational common read of the book *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* by Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz, in early 2023. This book was recommended as a common read by the UUA. Conversations that emerge out of this process may help us develop a land acknowledgement and a possible voluntary land-tax to support a local indigenous project.

Finally, we are committed to continue to practice using the tools of Dynamic Governance at Board meetings, and share these tools with interested committee and ministry leaders. UUSA committee and ministry leaders have been encouraged to join us for the UUA-sponsored training, **Widening the Circle of Governance in UU Congregations**, or to review the resources found at [www.uua.org/leaderlab/sociocracy](http://www.uua.org/leaderlab/sociocracy).

Dynamic Governance is the Unitarian Universalist version of sociocracy, a governance model that is more horizontal, more responsive, and more inclusive than standard church hierarchical governance. This model has roots in Quakerism and has been compared with the decision-making processes practiced by the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy. It is recommended by the UUA for congregations that wish to “*accountably dismantle oppressions in ourselves and our institutions*” as outlined in the Eighth Principle.

### **The Eighth Principle of Unitarian Universalism**

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

The UUSA Board of Trustees will continue to nurture the growth of the Eighth Principle within our congregation. We deeply appreciate the efforts of the Eighth Principle Ambassadors for helping us begin this important work.

In community...

John (on behalf of Anne Moore and John Gerber)

### **Special Congregational Meeting on Proposed Bylaw Changes to Article IV**

The Ministry of Welcome and Membership has worked on the section of the bylaws pertaining to membership and has held Congregational Conversations in advance of a Congregational Meeting directly following the service on **Sunday, December 4** (in person and online). The final version is available [here](#). We need a quorum to be able to hold the vote. Please be on the lookout for an email with instructions on how to assign a proxy voter if you are unable to attend.

*Questions re: proposed changes to bylaws?* [uusa-welcome@googlegroups.com](mailto:uusa-welcome@googlegroups.com) *Questions re: proxy voting?* [board@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:board@uusocietyamherst.org)

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## Social Events

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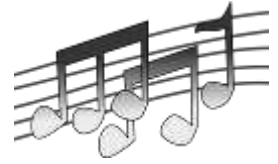


### **Music & Cookie Swap Saturday, December 10, 3:00 - 6:00 P.M.**

We want to gather — to celebrate our community and for music (by **Maura Whalen** and **Tom Fricke**) and for **COOKIES**.

Will you join us? Can you help? Sign up to help out here:

<https://forms.gle/2k2dVnVBpsZC13Dp6>



**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 on Zoom. 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.

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## Religious Education Ministry

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December is such a fun time to work with children. There is so much going on in school and at home and in various communities. Days off, visiting families, and often the first big snowfall of the year.

In religious education for November, **the elementary students** at UUSA finished up our units on creativity and problem solving. We learned about famous inventors, the importance of making mistakes, and persevering through setbacks. For December we will learn about the holidays we celebrate in our congregation and at our homes. Families will be invited to share any of their own traditions with the class.

**Our nursery and preschool class** has continued learning through play about the principles of Unitarian Universalism. They were excited to welcome **Cameron**, the new nursery and preschool intern, who will be helping in their class this year.

**Middle school youth** have been enjoying the Crossing Paths curriculum with their peers at the UU Society of Northampton and Florence. We visited Congregation B'Nai Israel in Northampton last month, and in December we'll visit St John's Episcopal Church for a vespers service.

**There are three special services we want to make sure families know about coming up.**

- Friday, December 16, 6:00 P.M. - Winter Solstice Service. We will gather with song and ritual to tell the story of the solstice.
- Sunday, December 18, 10:30 A.M. - Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins. During the time for all ages we will invite members of the congregation to help us tell the tale of Jewish folk hero Hershel's defeat of some tricky goblins.
- Saturday, December 24, 4:00 P.M., - Family Lessons and Carols. We will sing together and tell the Christmas story. Children and adults of all ages are invited to join!

Andrew Coate (he/him/his)  
Director of Religious Education

**(More RE news on page 6!)**



*On November 13, as Rev. Rachael told the Parable of the Sower as part of her service, the children present were invited by Andrew Coate, DRE, to "sow seeds" on fertile soil (a blue cloth), on a hot, rocky landscape (the cancel), and on our center aisle, where any seeds were sure to be "trodden down."*

**Youth Group** Youth Group has had a busy and engaging month. At the end of October we gleaned excess root vegetables at Next Barn Over in Hadley to donate to a food pantry in Holyoke. At the start of November we had our fall backfire campfire with games, songs, and s'mores. We bridged in several new members to Youth Group and a new adviser as well. The following week we cooked burritos for the Interfaith Cot Shelter.

In December we will cheer on runners at the Hot Chocolate Run for Safe Passage and cook another meal for the Interfaith Cot Shelter to wrap up 2022.

**Young Adults** The Young Adult group made cookies from scratch for the Interfaith Cot Shelter this month at the kitchen of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst. We made jokes and learned about Abbott and Costello.

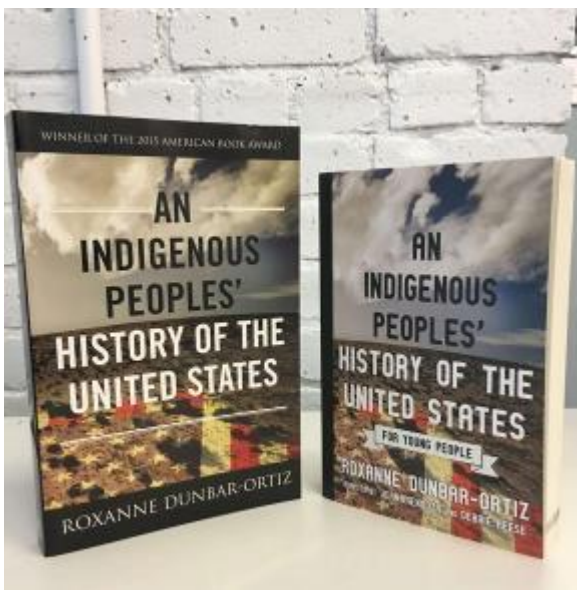
We will meet once more in December and will have another opportunity to bake a dessert for the Interfaith Cot Shelter.

Collee Williams (she/they) - [why share pronouns?](#)  
Youth and Young Adult Coordinator

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## CONGREGATIONAL COMMON READ

You are invited to join us for a congregational common read of the UUA Beacon Press book, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. We are planning on exploring the topics raised in this powerful book during three facilitated Zoom meetings in early 2023.



You could read either of the hard copy versions (original or young adult, which was adapted from the original by Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese).

Or, you could listen to the original version on Audible. (When you go to the website link at the bottom of this article, you'll find an audio link and can hear a two-minute sample.)

In addition to three group meetings, you may join us for one or more **optional facilitated discussions online** between meetings.

For more information and to register for this UUSA program, please see: <https://www.uusocietyamherst.org/readings/uusa-common-read-invitation/>

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## Finance Committee

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The Finance Committee will meet on Monday, December 14, at 7:15 P.M. on Zoom.

### **DRIVERS NEEDED!**

The Caring Circle (see next page! hopes to expand its list of volunteers who are willing and able to drive a member in need of a ride to an important appointment. This kind of assistance is vital — and we are facing a challenge finding drivers.

We are asking that you please consider helping by adding your name to our list.

If you can only drive during the day, say so. If you are able to drive at any time, let us know. [If you do not have access to our UUSA directory, which includes **Catharine Porter's** contact information, please contact **Lea** in the office. — Your editor]

Catherine Porter



**O come, O come Emmanuel  
And with your captive children dwell  
Give comfort to all exiles here  
And to each aching heart bid cheer**

**REJOICE! REJOICE! Emmanuel shall come within  
As LOVE to dwell.**

*(Singing the Living Tradition #225)*

Dear Friends, as we enter again — singing, yearning, praying — into this season of light in darkness, let us hold each other, loved ones, neighbors, the whole world close. Our **Minister, Caring Circle, and Pastoral Care Team** are here for you when you could use a phone- or in-person visit, a ride, some nourishing soup or casserole, a listening ear, perhaps someone who will ask, “How goes it with your soul?”

Our **Caring Circle** coordinator is **Catharine Porter**. Please contact her or your own Caring Person for 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**. Please contact anyone on the team for more complex or personal needs. Other members are **Charlie Atwood, Gene Herman, Rev. Rachael Hayes, Carol Johnson, Pete Rogers, Rev. Elizabeth Alcaide**, and our newest member, **Oliver MacFadden**. Our beloved founding member, **Mary Wyse**, has recently stepped down after 12 years, with our admiration and gratitude.

Wishing you quiet moments of togetherness and rejoicing as Love, Truth, Light, and Hope “shall come within . . . to dwell.”

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## ION Corner

The Interfaith Opportunity Network (ION) has resumed its regular (pre-COVID) practice of holding its monthly meetings at members’ houses of worship. In November, the meeting was held at Leverett Congregational Church. We were informed that the Stolen Beam Series will be offered at the First Congregational Church (in Amherst). This series focuses on the legacy of African enslavement, what was stolen, what may be owed and historical examples of reparations. It will be held on Sundays, January 2– February 19, from 2:00-3:20 P.M. There may be room for more people to attend. If you are interested contact Dorothy Cresswell, [Dcresswell321@gmail.com](mailto:Dcresswell321@gmail.com).

Respectfully,

Mary Beth Seminario UUSA ION representative

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## Focus on Our Members — *the Holiday Special!*

**Louise Grosslein** (LG) taught high school computer programming and college biology labs; **Ron Grosslein** (RG) designs and builds equipment for UMass Radio Astronomy. He played contradance fiddle with Swallowtail and continues to play with The Moving Violations.

Their children, now grown, are Martin and Anna. Louise and Ron live in Amherst and were interviewed by **Ellen Pile** (EP).

[Editor’s note: We ran the first part of Ellen’s interview with the Grossleins in the November newsletter. Read on to find why we’re calling this one the Holiday Special]

*The second part of Ellen’s interview begins on Page 8*



*Louise and Ron Grosslein*

***EP: Tell me about the Grosslein Family Band and UUSA.***

LG: We had an RE Director, Jon Rehmus. He knew our family played music, but it was just Ron and Martin who would sometimes play fiddles together at services. Jon wanted to be a community minister and he wanted us to play for his ordination.

RG: He asked us to play as a family for his ordination, which was a big deal! We'd never performed together as a band. Anna had been playing the flute for about a whole year!

LG: Jon had never heard her play; he had just heard Ron and Martin. Jon knew I could play piano, but I'd never played with them. I was studying classical piano; I wasn't playing

contradances. I tried hard to talk Jon out of it. I didn't see how we could pull it off in any reasonable way.

RG: Oh my God, the rehearsals were just hell on wheels. The kids would be scattered all over the place.

LG: And I barely ... I didn't know what I was doing. I had never played backup piano.

RG: So, it was a wild ride. We got through the performance; it went a lot better than you'd expect.

LG: And Jon was thrilled. I think we did a good job. People liked what we played.

RG: And Anna didn't try to play the melody; she just played long notes that fit. She learned to improvise before she could play the melody!

***EP: So UUSA was the start of the band?***

RG: Jon Rehmus started the Grosslein Family Band. It didn't exist before that, and we've done a bunch of things.

LG: For many years we played at the Christmas Eve Service as a family, all the way into the years when Martin switched to electric guitar. As a teenager, all he would play was heavy metal electric guitar, heavy metal Christmas music no less!

RG: Martin was listening to the Tran-Siberian Orchestra Christmas album, which has some familiar themes in it and piles of distorted guitar and crashing this and that. It's amazing stuff but well outside of what you usually hear in church.

LG: We said to the minister, what do you think? And to her credit she said, "that's fine, come on in."

RG: She said, "we're going for it, do it."

LG: So, we show up with these two huge amps and set it all up and we warned her, "don't sit up there when he starts playing."

RG: And it came time for us to play and she strode in in dignified fashion and sat down magisterially in the minister's chair right in front of Martin's guitar amp.

LG: Ron was playing Martin's electric bass.

RG: It was my debut and Martin was playing guitar with all the crashing stuff. Anna was singing. Louise had cooked up a rock 'n' roll piano accompaniment to Joy to the World. I looked around. The place was packed. The choir was behind us. The minister had escaped, just as well with two huge amps on stage. Our arrangement wasn't to just plow right through it. There was a guitar solo that probably made the stained glass clink.

LG: That was before the window was repaired, and it did shake sometimes.

RG: It rocked the rafters for sure. Then the strap on my electric bass guitar unclipped on one end and the bass started to head to the floor.

LG: They're really heavy.

RG: And we launch into the second stanza and the thing is sliding down my leg. I look up and the entire



congregation is looking at me. So, I think to heck with this. I stop playing. I haul the thing back up and pin it to my belly and I couldn't hold it. The thing was sliding down, and I was wiggling around and trying to get the bass to behave.

LG: Mind you the other three of us were keeping it together. Anna kept singing. Martin had no idea what was going on. I stayed with them.

RG: And there's this bass down around my knees. I turned around and there was the choir. Big smiles on all their faces! It was epic.

**EP: *That's a wonderful holiday story.***

LG: You know, UUSA embraced that kid of ours through his teenage years. They were kind and welcoming and it was wonderful. It was our home with all of the thorns that come along with trying to raise teenagers.

RG: Yes indeed.

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## Here We Have Gathered

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

A look back at UUSA based on December newsletters from 25 and 15 years ago.

### December 1997

**Holiday trees from Windfield Farm** A nice supply of good-sized, cut-your-own balsam fir Christmas trees are available to members and friends, with all proceeds to be donated to our Society. The trees are being offered by **Carolyn and Arnold Westwood** at 154 Windsor Bush Road, Cummington, MA. Please call them first at (413) XXX-XXXX. [2022 Editor's note: Arnold Westwood served as our settled Minister from 1975-1984 and later became our Minister Emeritus. At one point during his years in our pulpit, he made the long, carved wooden "Unitarian Meetinghouse" sign that still stands in front of our building from one of his trees.)

### December 2007

After months of delays due to red tape, the old sermon title/wayside pulpit sign badly damaged by vandals in May has finally been replaced. My thanks to **Charlie Atwood** for joining me in donating a sign. . . . When I brought it in from North Pleasant Street after our November 20 Interfaith Thanksgiving Service to change the title to that of **Alison's** November 25 sermon — "What do we really need?" — I realized that in the brand-new boxes of plastic letters (as well as in our *old* boxes, whose letters will also work with the new sign) . . .

*. . . we have no question marks!!!*

This made me laugh out loud! As part of a faith movement that considers asking questions as important, if not more so, than having answers, we probably used our old question marks so many times, the little plastic flanges that hook them onto the sign broke off. When I call the company for more letters, I'll ask if we can order question marks in bulk! I'm sure we'll use them all. — Janis Gray, President, Board of Trustees



[2022 Editor's note: Sadly, the 2007 sign was *also* damaged recently when vandals, or perhaps a car in an unreported crash, destroyed one of its posts. We feared the entire sign would have to be replaced.

But over Thanksgiving weekend, **Ron Grosslein** (a subject of this month's Focus on our Members — see page 8!) found a way to single-handedly fashion a new post, put the completely dismantled sign back together, and reinstall it in the ground! The post will be painted to match the original when warm weather returns.

Thanks so much, Ron! Paraphrasing the William James quotation now back on the wayside pulpit, ". . . *what you do makes a difference. It does.*" ]