

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



June 2023

**Our new Covenant
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**Let's celebrate
Rev. Rachael's Final Fellowship
on June 11!
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**Have you seen
Beloved CommUnity?
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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:

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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:

Collee 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

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



Schedule of Services

We encourage you to join us in person for our hybrid services, understanding that we still wear high-quality masks when we are indoors together. To attend 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, June 4, 10:30 A.M. – Centennial Flower Ceremony

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, June 11, 10:30 A.M. – Religious Education Milestones

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, June 19, 10:30 A.M. – Sacred Rest

The Rev. Rachael Hayes



Check out the UUSA YouTube Channel!

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

Dedicated Offerings

From September to June, our Society donates each month to a dedicated offering recipient and splits 50/50 every Sunday's offering plate with the recipient organization. Since fall, our members have generously contributed the following: \$1,025 to Letcher County in Eastern KY; \$875 to the Hospice of the Fisher Home; \$2,100 to Abortion Rights Fund of Western Massachusetts; \$950 for Local Energy Advocates; \$1000 to Ohketeau Cultural Center; \$1,375 for Rise Above. We will report in a future newsletter what we raised in April for The Sojourner Truth School for Social Change Leadership.

The Dedicated Offering Committee decided to continue the offering for our May recipient, the Wildflower Alliance, through the remaining weeks of our services in June. On the first Sunday in May, Sera Davidow, Director of the Alliance, spoke very movingly about helping one man who was in extreme crises. She remained in contact with him giving him a chance to talk. This was an example of the very personal service their organization provides people facing life threatening psychiatric problems.

The Alliance supports healing and empowerment for people who have been incapacitated by such trauma, problems with substances and other life interrupting challenges. What makes the Wildflower Alliance distinct is that they are staffed by people who have experienced the same type of problems as the people they help. And at the heart of their work is essential peer-to-peer support.

The Alliance has specific locations in Springfield, Greenfield, Holyoke and Northampton at which different services are offered depending on the location. Some of the services provided include a peer run respite center, drop-in centers for peer support, snacks and coffee, quiet rooms, art and music supplies and computer and fax machines.

In Amherst, working in collaboration with CRESS (Community Responders for Equity, Safety and Service) they provide free help in four different ways: a weekly alternative to suicide group; a weekly recovery group for anyone struggling with addictive behavior; 1:1 support for anyone struggling with any aspect of life and 1:1 support for anyone struggling with substances including recovery.

Please give generously to help the Wildflower Alliance support people challenged in their daily lives by psychiatric and other extreme problems. Thank you.

Mary Beth Seminario
Dedicated Offering Committee member

More about the Dedicated Offering Committee

The Dedicated Offering Committee (DOC) selects non-profit organizations that our Society will support with donations from our Sunday collections September - June. We split our collections 50/50 with them. In turn, our UU Society is enriched by learning about organizations we did not know about that are helping enrich our world.

The DOC meets in August and as needed throughout the year to select the recipients for the coming year. A different organization is chosen for every month. The DOC solicits members for names of specific organizations and asks they complete a specific DO form, which is available in the office or on-line at <https://forms.gle/hypyMGzMJHgeAVf26>. A representative from a chosen organization is asked to speak about it on the First Sunday of its month.

We welcome new members. If you are interested in learning more about or joining the DOC, please contact any of the people listed below.

Members: **Anne Perkins, Linda Honan, Carolyn Holstein, Mary Beth Seminario, Pat Brinkman, and Linda Callahan.**

Co-President's Letter

The members of the UUSA present at the annual meeting on June 4, 2023 took a leap of faith and approved the use of unrestricted financial reserves to help cover part of our annual expenses in FY24 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024). Our Finance Committee suggested that this action would be unusual and should not be taken lightly. Hence this letter to the congregation.

Earlier this year, we shared with you [our financial projections](#) for next year. We recommended that the UUSA staff, including our minister, receive a much-deserved 8% Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase. This, along with modest increases in necessary expenses and investments in program activities, meant that even with the substantial rise in FY24 pledges, we would have a shortfall. The Board of Trustees therefore recommended that we make up for this shortfall in FY24 using unrestricted reserves or “money in the bank.”

Clearly, this would be a foolhardy action if we were not optimistic about our future as a healthy and growing congregation. However, this also means we have work to do during the coming year! Increased rental income, successful fundraisers, plate collections supported by a full sanctuary on Sunday morning, and pledges from new members, will all be needed to balance the FY25 budget. We believe we can do it. Here's why.

Former members and regular participants in Sunday services are returning now that we are “live” once again in the sanctuary. Visitors are showing up and are warmly welcomed by greeters. Participation in events like our recent auction and fundraising gala are an example of the excitement that continues to grow. And there is more. We believe our local community needs our active public work for social justice and efforts to address climate change. We believe the world needs a place of respite for those who are suffering and to help build connections during a time of continued loneliness and isolation for many. We believe we are a “Five Star Congregation” committed to being our best selves, as we live ourselves into a mission of radical social change, community connections, and personal spiritual growth. We believe this is an exciting time to be a member of the UUSA as we reboot our congregation coming out of the pandemic.

If you have been a visitor who has attended a Sunday service and perhaps are thinking about getting more involved, why not take the [advice of the Ministry of Welcome and Membership](#) and “*make some noise... take up space.*” While it's true that we need financial support, more important, we need your fresh ideas, skills, energy, and curious minds. We particularly need you to question our traditions and to shake things up.

If you are already a member, you are encouraged to stick your hand out to visitors, ask about their interests, and invite them to join you for coffee after the service. If you are a member of a UUSA committee, ministry, or team, think about new people who might want to join your group. Perhaps invite a friend, neighbor, or family member to a Sunday service or event. Simply introducing our beloved meetinghouse to a friend might result in a much-needed rental! And if you are one of those dedicated members who do all this on a regular basis, thank you.

We are grateful that our congregation voted to take a leap of faith. We are optimistic about our future. Our optimism is based on the sure knowledge that we are blessed with an exceptional staff who bring us powerful sermons, beautiful music, a progressive religious education program, and effective communication and management. We are optimistic because the world and our local community will be a better place with a vibrant and vital Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst. And we are optimistic because we have proven ourselves to be a resilient, “can do” community that will continue to rise to opportunities and challenges.

In community,
John Gerber, Co-President

Some Annual Meeting Highlights

We elected a new Board of Trustees for 2023 - 2024:

Officers:

- Co-President: John Gerber (2022-2024)
- Co-President: Jeff Clark (2023-2025)
- Clerk: Ashley Carter (2023-2025)
- Treasurer: Eric Murphy (2022-2024)

At Large:

- Linda Callahan (2023-2025)
- Sue Kelly (2022-2024)
- Deeya Pavelle (2022-2024)

Leadership Development Committee:

- Sue Alexander (2023-2024)
- Lauren Croce (2023-2024)
- Louise Grosslein (2023-2024)



Our congregation also voted to choose between Option L and Option S of the Proposed Congregational Covenant for the UUSA for use for three years, at which time there will be a vote to keep it or revisit it. Option 3 reads as follows:

Love is the spirit of this community.
We dwell together in peace,
We seek truth and justice in love,
We honor everyone’s worth and dignity, and
We do the work of building the Beloved Community in our world.

Religious Education Ministry



Youth Group: Youth Group just wrapped up our annual camping trip! This time we stayed at the Rowe Center rather than our usual location at the Mohawk State Forest. We had gorgeous weather on Friday night and spent some time stargazing after dinner. On Saturday we moved into the Recreation Hall during the rain storm. We played many rainy day games: Spyfall, Mafia, and Snake Oil, in addition to classic Youth Group activities like God in the Dark. We also bridged out one of our senior members of the Youth Group and sang songs with ukulele accompaniment from two members of Youth Group.

Our last two meetings of the year for the Youth Group will be on Sunday June 4th and Sunday, June 11th

from 2:00-4:00 P.M. at USNF.

Young Adult Group: A group of us got together on Saturday, May 13th in the courtyard in front of USNF. We caught up about our lives, chatted about summer plans, and got smoothies at the Haymarket Cafe. We decided to continue our monthly meetings during June, July, and August. Collee will be sending out an email shortly with a poll to determine our June meeting time. If you would like to be added to the Young Adult group listserv, you can email Collee at youthfulusnf@gmail.com.

Social Events

Ministerial Fellowship Garden Party! Sunday, June 11, at noon. Join us in celebrating the Final Fellowship of **Rev. Rachael** on the beautiful grounds of **Candi Talley's** Stone House Farm, 649 E. Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Bring your own picnic and water bottle — cake provided!

Carpooling recommended.

The Women's Circle is a supportive and social group of UUSA women and open to all. We meet at noon on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, sometimes on Zoom, sometimes in person. If you are not already on the email notification list, please contact **Lea** in the office to request the link — or to ask her to let **Sophie Rogers** know you want to be added to that list!

The Men's Breakfast With Kelly's Restaurant still closed as it transitions to a new owner, our no-agenda Men's Group that meets each Wednesday at 7:00 A.M. will be gathering instead at The Stables, 326 Russell St. (Route 9) in Hadley.

Finance Committee

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

Stained Glass

Like many of us, the Angel of the Lilies may have felt more than a bit isolated over the last few years — but that may be about to change! When our building was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not open our sanctuary to visitors as we had on the first Thursdays of June, July, August, September, October, April and May (since 2007) for the monthly Amherst Arts Nights programs (later Arts Night Plus). Nor did people come in to see our window at other times. Sadly, even when the pandemic lockdowns finally lifted, the Amherst Arts Nights promoters reluctantly agreed their volunteer-run effort had run its course.

This summer, however, the angel created in memory of Sarah Louisa Frothingham (a Unitarian from Boston) may have visitors again — thanks to two self-guided walking tours now being planned in town.



The first is a walking and virtual tour of the Amherst Center Cultural District being created by the Amherst Business Improvement District (BID). It will include our window, along with many other downtown cultural sites of all kinds. At the BID's request, I provided a less-than-450 word piece introducing the window and its history. The information will be accessible through a QR code placed somewhere by the BID outside our meetinghouse, and through a voice-over by phone on the virtual tour. "We are excited to showcase the cultural

institutions around Amherst, including the Angel of the Lilies, and look forward to the completion of the project!” wrote the BID.

The second tour in the works is by a separate group. It is more limited in focus, to just stained glass and certain types of church architecture downtown. Its organizer wrote, “We have a small grant from the Amherst Cultural Council and will be hiring a researcher to pull together a tour script and text for a brochure, probably over the summer. I am aware of the YouTube video about the conservation of your window. With your permission, we’d like to put a link to it on the project’s website. Perhaps you have other materials about the window that you would be willing to share with our researcher. We have several scholarly advisors, and at least one of them, Virginia Raguin, a retired professor at College of the Holy Cross, wants to visit this spring and see all the sites.”

I met in March in the sanctuary with several of the local organizers and with Virginia Raguin. People who served on previous incarnations of our Stained Glass Committees going back into the 1980s might remember she served as UUSA’s consultant during the years when we were exploring ways to restore our former John LaFarge triptych. Virginia was delighted to see our Angel, now fully restored since her last visit, and as requested, I sent her an enormous number of files and copies of primary sources about our window which had been gathered by many researchers from UUSA since 1925, when the window came to our building as a donation by the American Unitarian Association. Many thanks to all who did research before me! As long as this self-guided tour and its website exist, our efforts will live on.

Janis Gray

Our Caring Ministries

In place of our monthly Caring Ministries poem, for June we share the documentary created this spring by UMass film student **Liliya Miller** (daughter of our Music Director **Brenda Miller**). If you haven’t had a chance to see it yet, here is your chance at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPjgB3YtfbI>



Our Minister **Rachael**, members of the **Caring Circle**, and **Pastoral Care Team** are here for you in Beloved Community.

We are here when you would welcome a phone or in-person visit, a ride, some nourishing soup or a casserole, a listening heart, perhaps a caring fellow parishioner who may ask, “How goes it with your soul?” These are just a few ways we share our lives and our faith with each other in beloved community.

Our **Caring Circle** coordinator is **Catharine Porter**. Please contact her or your own Caring Person for simple needs. Other Caring Circle members are **Jeanne Ballantine**, **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. Please contact anyone on the team for more complex or personal needs. Other members are **Charlie Atwood**, **Rev. Rachael Hayes**, **Carol Johnson**, **Pete Rogers**, and **Rev. Elizabeth Alcaide**.

Summer is nearly here! Bidding you peace and love as we journey toward wholeness.

Here's looking at yoUU!

UUSA's Communication Team invites you to *share brief tidings* with our congregation about births in your family, graduations, weddings, changes in jobs, or other significant events in your life. If you have something you'd like to see in a future newsletter, send a note to **Janis Gray** — with the knowledge that your info will be accessible to the public, since the newsletter is posted on our website.. (Reach out to **Lea** in the office if you do not have Janis's contact information.)

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 June newsletters from 25 and 15 years ago.

June 1998

Memorial Fund At its April meeting, the Board resurrected the Memorial Fund Committee, which oversees those funds given to the Society in memory of deceased members and friends. The Committee consists of **Paul Barber, Dick Stevens, and Florence Bert**. Moribund for the past have dozen years, the fund has a substantial amount that could be used for items or projects that can be identified as a memorial. If you know of an appropriate use of the fund, or wish to contribute to it, please contact one of its members.

June 2008

Meetinghouse The Meetinghouse Committee has a number of projects planned for the summer. Volunteers, both skilled and unskilled, will be needed upstairs and downstairs in July and August! If you are interested please contact the person listed in the table below shortly before the project date. First, we'll need people to move RE furniture to allow professionals to refinish the vinyl tile flooring. The following week, furniture in the sanctuary needs to be moved out of the way as the wooden floors are refinished.

The Meetinghouse Committee members themselves will be renovating the small kitchen next to the sanctuary the weeks of August 18 and 25. We'll be doing some other odd jobs those weeks as well – carpentry, painting, cleanup, etc. Please join us. Being part of a work crew is fun!

PROJECT	DATE	CONTACT
RE tile refinishing	Furniture needs to be moved July 13 or 14.	Carol Rothery
Sanctuary floor refinishing.	Move furniture July 20 and afternoons during the week	Carol Rothery
Installation of new toilets. Restroom cosmetic work afterwards.	Week of July 28	Anne Perkins
Renovation of sanctuary kitchenette	August 16 - 25	Anne Perkins