

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



August 2023



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

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:

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:

Jeff Clark and John Gerber

Clerk:

Ashley Carter

Treasurer:

Eric Murphy

Members At Large:

Linda Callahan

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

Our in-person services resume Sunday, August 6, with a new Masking Policy!

To attend 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

The UUSA Board of Trustees has voted unanimously to change the COVID-19 Building Use Policy to “mask optional” in most of the sanctuary when the risk level is low. The new policy is effective August 6. A “mask required” area will be maintained on the balcony, next to the windows. Masks are always welcome. We look forward to seeing you! *To attend 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*

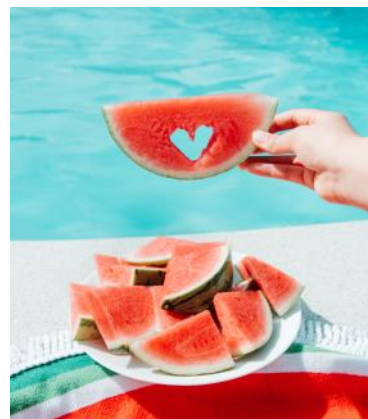
Our new policy will depend on weekly tracking of wastewater using BioBot Analytics COVID-19 website. If wastewater tests remain below 1000 copies/mL in Hampshire County, the UUSA will remain in Low or Green risk level and continue as “mask optional,” If the risk level increases above that level, we will move to “mask required” or more stringent limits, if necessary. For details, please see the revised policy here: https://www.uusocietyamherst.org/covid_policy/

Sunday, August 6, 10:30 A.M. – Title to be announced
The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, August 13, 10:30 A.M. – Title to be announced
Alyson Bull

Sunday, August 20, 10:30 A.M. – Title to be announced
Emma Livingston

Sunday, August 27, 10:30 A.M. – Title to be announced
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 September 2022, 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, \$1,000 for The Sojourner Truth School for Social Change Leadership, and \$1,375 for the Wildflower Alliance.

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 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.



2nd Annual UUSA Congregational Picnic

Saturday, August 5th | 12-3 PM

GROFF PARK | 83 Mill Lane, Amherst



UUSA members, friends and children of all ages invited

Rain or shine! We have a reservation for the covered pavilion

If possible, bring a camp chair or blanket; picnic tables are limited

Potluck (by last name):

A to G - DESSERT

H to M - MAIN DISH

M to Z - SIDE DISH/SALAD

BYO beverages

Kids bring bathing suits for “splash pad”

Help us to make it a zero-waste event! Bring your own plates, cloth napkin and silverware.

Recycling and composting will be available.

August Co-President's Letter

A dictionary definition of the word **feedback** is “*information about reactions to a product, a person's performance, or a decision etc. which is used as a basis for improvement.*” At this point in our congregational year when we are about to begin a new worship season, it seems like a good time to ask for feedback from our members and committed friends. **What has been your experience of the leadership, management, and general governance of the UUSA over the past year?**

Governance is a shared responsibility of the Minister, the Board of Trustees, and the many committees, ministries, groups, circles, and teams of the congregation. Please share your thoughts and suggestions using this “[digital suggestion box](#)” (an email). Our Congregational Administrator will forward your feedback to the Minister, Board of Trustees and/or committee, as appropriate. The feedback you share will be used “*as a basis for improvement*” over the next few years.

Here are a few of the actions and decisions that we made over the past year relating to governance, some of which were guided by your feedback.

- We returned from the isolation of COVID restrictions and brought Sunday services back to the sanctuary. At the same time, we continued to offer an online option for those unable to attend services in person.
- We “test drove” and approved a new covenant.
- We introduced a new Director of Religious Education to the congregation.
- We had our first face-to-face social events since the pandemic shut us down, with the cookout at Groff Park, the pancake breakfast in the Social Hall, the Music and Cookie Swap, and the Fundraiser-Gala.
- We participated in a series of Cottage Meetings, in person and online.
- We invited all committee, ministry, circle, and team leaders to three Department Meetings to try to improve communication and collaboration in governance of the congregation.
- We approved the much-needed repair work on the siding of our beloved meetinghouse.
- We organized a congregational common read of the book *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* by Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz.
- Many of us committed to practice using the tools of Dynamic Governance (aka sociocracy) and participated in a UUA-sponsored national training, *Widening the Circle of Governance in UU Congregations*.
- We approved a change in our bylaws to clarify the responsibilities of membership in the UUSA.
- We raised enough money in a winter appeal to balance our 2022-23 budget and initiated a new generosity-based pledge framework that resulted in an increase in pledges for 2023-24.
- We saw the emergence of two new committees: the Reproductive Justice Action Group, and the Sociocracy Support Circle.
- We celebrated Reverend Rachael's acceptance into Full Ministry and approved a 3-month sabbatical leave to begin in the spring of 2024.
- We passed a 2023-24 budget which included an increase in salaries for our much-loved and deserving minister and staff.
- We passed a new COVID Policy to make masks optional in the meetinghouse beginning in August providing the risk remains low.

We recognize that the list above focuses more on governance than ministry and does not include weekly activities such as Sunday services (including sermons, music and religious education), our contributions to non-profit organizations in our community through Dedicated Offerings, feeding people on Wednesday mornings, clean-up activities at the Connecticut and Green Rivers, the good work of the Caring Circle and Pastoral Care Team, and on and on and on..... we do a lot! At this point we are asking for your feedback on leadership, management and governance over the past year. If you are willing, please send your thoughts and suggestions to: board@uusocietyamherst.org.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to share your feedback.
John M. Gerber, co-president

Social Events

Read all about the August 5 Congregational Picnic — see page 3!

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.

The Women's Circle is on hiatus until late September. This supportive and social group of UUSA women is 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!

Social Action



You are invited to TWO special events
in support of an Afghan family that resettled here in Amherst!

On August 4 at 5:30 P.M., there will be a Community Dinner at the UU Society featuring Afghan cuisine, prepared by Farzana Faqiri. The cost is \$20 per adult and \$12 per youth under the age of 16. All proceeds go to the Shirzad family (Farzana's family) who have resettled here from Afghanistan.

Please RSVP to **Anne Louise White** by **Tuesday morning, August 1**. Contact **Lea** in the office if you need Anne's email address or phone number. Please specify the names of the patrons, and their choice of either the Curried Beef Stew or the Gulpi Vegetarian option.

You can pay at the event, or you can prepay with Venmo to **@Anne-White-171** Write "August fourth" in the note when you venmo.

Menu

Afghan Qorma Kofta - Curried Beef meatball Stew

Ingredients: Halal beef, onion, garlic, split peas, tomato paste, ginger, Kofta Curry spices, vegetable oil, turmeric

Gulpi - Vegetarian Curry

Cauliflower, onion, garlic, tomatoes, tomato paste, turmeric, ginger, chick Peas, vegetable oil

Basmati Rice - with cumin and spices

Salad

Lettuce, Cucumber, tomato, Pepper, Mint, Lemon, Olive Oil, Parsley

Afghan Bread

Labne Hot Sauce

Labne Kefir yoghurt, hot pepper, mint, parsley, garlic, salt

And then . . . See next page!

***Anne Louise White and Paul Kaplan
with special guests Julie Rivera and friends***

Fundraiser Concert for Faqiri's Kitchen

In support of an Afghan Refugee Enterprise

Sunday, August 13th at 7 pm

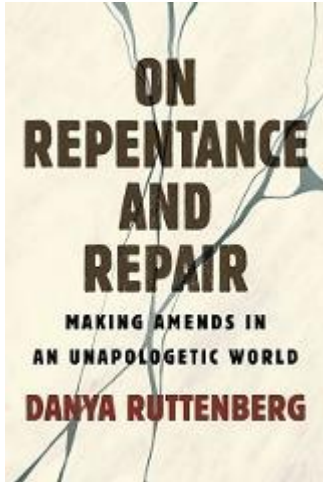


At the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst

121 N. Pleasant Street, Amherst

Admission: \$15

Invitation to the 2023-24 UUA Common Read



This new book invites readers of any faith to explore practices for accountability that can bring us into wholeness and make a difference in our personal, community, and national relationships. It will provide a foundation for our discussions of reparations and our commitment to the Eighth Principle. It's a terrific follow-up to our common read last year, *An Indigenous People's History of the U.S.*

John Gerber hope to organize three meetings in September, October and November to discuss this book with anyone interested. If you would like to read the book this summer it is available from [inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop](#).

John is also looking for a few people who are willing to work with me to organize the three meetings. The UUA provides guidance and resources on how to manage the meetings, and it often takes a few people to do well. If you are willing to help, please let him know. He'd like to meet in late August to prepare.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will meet on Monday, August 14, at 7:14 pm. on Zoom.

When Conversation Turns to Suicide Aug. 3 - 4, Bangs Community Center– 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

When Conversation Turns to Suicide is a 16-hour training based in the Alternatives to Suicide approach, and intended as an alternative to ASIST, QPR, and similar approaches that remain rooted in conventional medicalized systems. This training is open to providers, family members, peer supports, first responders, and anyone else who wants to learn how to offer support to someone who is suicidal. Participants will learn:

- Common Myths about Suicide
- A framework for being in conversation with someone who is struggling
- The links between trauma (including systemic oppression) and suicide
- The importance of power sharing
- And more!

This training is FREE, but donations are welcome! This training is offered through a collaboration of the Wildflower Alliance and Community Responders for Equity, Safety, & Service (CRESS). This training is intended for people living, working, and/or going to school in Amherst, MA.

A few reminders: Participants must miss no more than two hours of training content (not including breaks) in order to receive a certificate of completion. Please note that there are significant similarities (as well as significant differences) between this training and the Alternatives to Suicide Group Facilitator training. Although we still require people to follow our attendance guidelines even if they have completed the other training, please be prepared for some overlaps in information offered (although we do find that each group is different and there is still much wisdom to be gained even if similar information is being offered).

Our Caring Ministries



Members of the **Caring Circle** and **Pastoral Care Team** are still here for you this August! 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**.

Bidding you peace and love as we journey toward wholeness.

Denominational Affairs



Thursday July 20, 2023

New England Region UUA
24 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210

Congregations in the New England Region,

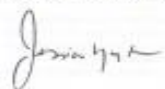
I am excited to share with you that the region has a new Lead! Reverend Evin Carvill Ziemer has been promoted to be the Developmental Lead for the New England Region. After obtaining their Master of Divinity degree from Earlham School of Religion, Rev. Evin served UU congregations from 2008 – 2014. They have over fourteen years of experience as a congregational consultant – first as a program consultant with the Ohio-Meadville district, then as congregational life field staff in the Central East region. This position marks a return to New England for Rev. Evin, having grown up in New England and living here with their family for the last six years. As such, Rev Evin is already familiar with many of the congregations in the region. Evin brings a collaborative spirit, integrity, boundaried and transparent leadership, as well as a strong background in RE, youth ministry, sensitivity to neurodivergence, and trauma-informed ministry. We are excited to have Rev. Evin's ministry joined with those of the primary contacts already connected with you in the New England Region. As a Regional Lead, Rev. Evin will also serve on the Congregational Life Leadership Team, which helps to guide the work of the over 45 members of the Congregational Life staff group at the UUA.



Rev. Evin says, "I'm looking forward to getting to know the New England Region more deeply including, I hope, many of you. Getting to know and working with the dedicated lay leaders and religious professionals serving our congregations is truly one of the best parts of being Congregational Life Staff."

Rev. Evin started as the Lead on July 1 and will reach out to many of you in the coming months. You may contact them directly at eziemer@uua.org. Be sure to read Rev. Evin's introduction in the next monthly newsletter.

Yours In Spirit,



Jessica York
Director of Congregational Life