

# THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**November 2023**



Love a Piano Nov. 5 (pg. 3)

Shingle Mingle Nov. 12 (pg. 5)

Social Justice Jubilee (pg. 5)

New Members! (pg. 6)

New: Junior Youth Group! (pg. 7)

## 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:**

Eden Richardson [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:**

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



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## Schedule of Services

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*We encourage you to attend our Sunday services in person. As of this writing*, masks are optional\* given the decline in COVID numbers in our area. You may also attend online. Click <https://bit.ly/463gaOt> Meeting ID: 998 5370 0822 PW: 599092 Or call in +1 646 876 9923 and enter Meeting ID: 998 5370 0822.

\*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. A “mask required” area will be maintained on the balcony, next to the windows. Masks are always welcome. 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/](https://www.uusocietyamherst.org/covid_policy/)

**Sunday, November 5, 10:30 A.M. – *Tend These Fires***  
The Rev. Rachael Hayes

**Sunday, November 12, 10:30 A.M. – *Chutes and Ladders for Universalists***  
The Rev. Rachael Hayes

**Sunday, November 19, 10:30 A.M. – *Generosity: From This We Live***  
The Rev. Rachael Hayes

**Sunday, November 26, 10:30 A.M. – *TRUUST the Process***  
Andrew Coate, Director of Religious Education



### Check out the 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

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. We will report in future newsletters what we raised in September for **UUA Disaster Relief Fund** to support the Montpelier VT UU congregation, which suffered a great loss when the Connecticut river flooded its building, and raised in October for **Maui Strong** to support victims of the wildfires which devastated Lahaina in western Maui, Hawaii.

The Dedicated Offering recipient for November will be the **Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC)**. Established in 1952 in Greenfield with the mission of cleaning up pollution in the river and its local watershed, the CRC has grown over the past 70 plus years to include protection of the river and watersheds from its source in northern New Hampshire to the Long Island Sound. There are “river stewards” in the five states along its route who manage these efforts. Volunteers, including many from our UUSA, regularly help with clean-up efforts of the river and its tributaries. Due to this work, this river has been transformed from a cesspool to a place where natural life flourishes. Please give generously to help the Conservancy continue its preservation efforts. Thank you.

### More about Dedicated Offering Committee

The Dedicated Offering Committee selects non-profit organizations that our Society will support with donations from our Sunday collections. We solicit UUSA's members for names of organizations through form which is available in the office and on-line at <https://forms.gle.hypMGzMJHgeAVf26>. A representative of the chosen organization is asked to speak about it on the first Sunday of the month. We welcome new members. If you are interested in learning more or joining DOC, please contact **Anne Perkins, Mary Beth Seminario, Linda Callahan, Carolyn Holstein, Linda Honan** or **Brenda Bushouse**.



**A MELODIUS COMMUNITY  
TIME  
THIS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5,  
3:00 P.M.!**

Piano *salon* at 470 Montague Road, the home of **Howard Apley** (in Sunderland! Off Route 47 near Montague town line). Classical piano presented by **Sue Kelsey, Howard Apley** and **Fran Plumer**.

Please bring a beverage and/or tapas (finger-food appetizer) to share.



**FAQIRI'S KITCHEN: AFGHAN MEALS NOVEMBER 17!**  
*But you must order by November 14.*

Members of our UU have joined with the Mt. Toby Friends Meeting and Northampton Friends Meeting to form a Circle of Care for an Afghan Family in Amherst.

Farzana Faqiri, husband Ismail, and 4 children from Kabul, Afghanistan, came to the U.S. over a year ago. After being moved by the government several times, they ended up settling in Amherst. The children are thriving in Amherst schools, and the parents are trying hard to learn English. To help the family with finances, Farzana prepares traditional Afghan meals available for take-out.

Farzana will be selling take-out food on Friday, **November 17**. She will prepare a vegetarian entrée and a halal meat entrée.

The meals will be available for pickup between **5:00 and 6:00 P.M.** at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst. Please enter in the upstairs door on the right side of the building. Payment can be made by check to **Mohammad Ismail Shirzad**, or by cash. (No credit cards or PayPal accepted).

**The menu:**

**CHICKEN CURRY- \$18**

White meat, turmeric, garlic, tomato, onion, lemon, curry masala, tomato paste.

**Basmati Rice** with cumin, carrots, raisins and spices

**Labne Hot Sauce:** Labne Kefir yoghurt, hot pepper, mint, parsley, garlic, salt

**Afghan Bread** (flour, yeast, veg. oil, milk, sugar, salt)

**GULPI- VEGETARIAN CURRY- \$15**

Cauliflower, onion, garlic, tomatoes, tomato paste, turmeric, Ginger, Chick Peas, vegetable oil

**Basmati Rice** with cumin, carrots, raisins and spices

**Labne Hot Sauce:** Labne Kefir yoghurt, hot pepper, mint, parsley, garlic, salt

**Afghan Bread** (flour, yeast, veg. oil, milk, sugar, salt)

**TO ORDER, contact Anne Louise White by 7:00 P.M. Tuesday, November 14 (Lea in the UUSA office can get you her contact information). Please specify the number and types of meals you are choosing. Please provide your email and phone contact info.**

**ORDER PICKUP:**

**In Amherst, between 5:00 and 6:00 P.M. the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst. Enter at top of stairs on right side of the building as you face it.**

**WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US IN ENJOYING AFGHAN FOOD AND HELPING TO SUPPORT THE FAMILY! THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR WONDERFUL NEW NEIGHBORS.**



## Feedback Wanted by the Board of Trustees

The UUSA Board of Trustees would like to hear from you about your thoughts on the leadership, management, and general governance of the UUSA. 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 leader, as appropriate. Members of the Board will also be available during the coffee hour after the services to hear your thoughts. In addition, you are invited to speak directly to the Board at our next meeting. To be included on the board meeting agenda, please contact either of the co-presidents. We’d like to hear from you!

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## Co-President’s Letter

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*Perfection is divine, and to make it a goal of [humans] is to call on [human beings] to be divine. All we can do is try to wring our hearts clean in contrition. To be contrite at our failures is holier than to be complacent in perfection.*

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

At the time you’re reading this, we have kicked off a provocative discussion based on the teachings of the Jewish scholar Maimonides from the book “*On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World*” by Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg. The good news is that it’s not too late to get the book and participate in two more discussions.

Maimonides (1138–1204), also known as Moses ben Maimon, was a Sephardic Jewish philosopher who was one of the most prolific and influential Torah scholars of the Middle Ages. In his work, “Mishneh Torah”, he created a framework for how someone who commits harm, whether to another person or a community, can repent and repair their relationship with the one(s) harmed, as well as with God.

If you think this is only about learning Jewish teachings, don’t stop here!

The messages in this book have broad application to today’s world, particularly as we experience the “Me Too” movement, the rise in hate crimes, racial oppression, and countless acts of harm against people who deserve our respect. As Rabbi Ruttenberg states, “This book is for everybody. It is based on Jewish thought, but I am, very intentionally, applying these concepts to secular life and relationships. We’ve all caused harm, we’ve all been harmed, we’ve all witnessed harm. This is, I hope, a way into the work.”

Maimonides outlined five steps that an individual who harms another must take to put their relationship back on track.

- **Naming and owning the harm.** Recognizing the harm someone may have done to a person or community.
- **Starting to change.** Go down the path to make different, less harmful choices in one’s actions.
- **Restitution and accepting consequences.** What can the harm doer do to make amends and repair their relationship(s)?
- **Apology.** Asking for forgiveness of the one(s) harmed.
- **Making different choices.** Ensuring that harm is not committed in future relationships.

This framework offers two fundamental shifts in how we typically address harm in our culture. For one, the responsibility of repair is on the harm doer. Having the one harmed “forgive and forget” does not fix the situation and it certainly doesn’t help the harm doer to grow to be a better person. Secondly, the harm doer cannot fast track to an apology. Nothing is truly righted until they understand and accept what they’ve done and determined how to make amends in order to receive sincere forgiveness.

### *Want to Join the Discussion?*

Get the [paperback version of the book](#) or see if one's available through our libraries.

Watch Rabbi Ruttenberg's [video interview](#) discussing the book on Facebook.

[Register](#) for one or both of the following:

- Workshop #2: November 14 at 7:00 - 8:30 P.M. on Zoom, "Repentance and Repair in Our Covenanted Communities"
- Workshop #3: December 5 at 7:00 - 8:30 P.M. on Zoom, "Repentance and Repair to Transform Our World"

Please join and feel free to invite a friend!

In Community,

Jeff Clark

Co-President, UUSA Board of Trustees

## **COME TO THE SHINGLE MINGLE!**

On November 12, 2023, immediately after the Sunday services, we will be holding a Shingle Mingle in the Willie Eaton Social Hall. We will celebrate our congregation's success in re-siding the meetinghouse, answer questions about the project and ask for pledges to help retire its financing. The celebration will include a short presentation and treats will be served.

In the spring of 2022, we received information that our meetinghouse required immediate, professional attention. The siding on the old part of the building had failed, putting the integrity of the whole building at risk. We had to act.

With the considerable help from many volunteers, we vetted and hired a contractor, purchased materials, and completed the work in the fall of 2022. We used over \$46,000 of our cash reserves as a down payment to get the project started, and financed the rest with our long-time financial partner at Florence Savings Bank.

The building project itself was completed without a hitch, and the meetinghouse looks better than ever. We currently have an outstanding balance of approximately \$115,000, and hope to be able to retire the loan as quickly as possible to not draw from our reserves to make monthly mortgage payments in the future.

We invite members and friends to play a part in closing this chapter of UUSA history by making a pledge to retire our siding mortgage. Given the number of current contributing members and friends, we need to raise an average of \$1,300 total per household spread across the next three years.

The Board and Finance Committee acknowledge that we have asked the congregation to cover budgetary shortfalls last winter, and you stepped up. So, whatever members and friends are able to give now will be greatly appreciated.

Look for more information about this effort in the coming days, and join us for the Shingle Mingle on November 12.

## **JOIN THE UUSA SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTION**

On Sunday, October 1, after the Service, the Social Hall was abuzz with people talking about Social Justice (SJ). After some jabbering and scarfing down delicious sandwiches and other food, **Anne Louise White** led us in a great opening song, following which **Reverend Rachael** talked about the spiritual underpinnings of Social Justice. Then came the buzz and the fun!! Some of our R.E. kids had distributed Post-its, on which we all wrote some S.J. activities we had done, or imagined doing in the future. There were colorful posters on which to post these. The hall had been divided into five focus circles, with tables for brainstorming ideas in each of them. If you want to be involved in deciding which of these actions happen, let the appropriate person know. If you don't have access to our online directory, Lea Douville, our Congregational Administrator, can tell you how to reach them.

\*\*\* ENVIRONMENT/ GREEN SANCTUARY — contact **LOUISE GROSSLEIN**

This has been UUSA's most active Social Justice focus for a while now — and yet, many exciting new ideas for action or advocacy emerged. Some may be easy to implement, others may take a while. If you want to get

involved in making the decisions about what we do, get aboard!!

\*\*\* **BOLSTERING DEMOCRACY** — contact **GORDON WYSE**  
This group is primarily concerned with the 2024 election, with actions as a follow-up to our UUSA the Vote postcarding, but ideas ranged from book groups, perhaps about fascism or gun control, working with students, and concern for issues of war and peace. You can make a difference, this year and for our future!



\*\*\* **DISMANTLING OPPRESSIONS** — contact **ROB FUDERICH**  
UUSA members have participated in several anti-oppression workshops, with the most recent culminating in our adopting the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, covenanting to work to end oppressions and to build the Beloved Community. We could work with Amherst’s reparations activities, develop relationships with indigenous and/or refugee communities, continue our common reads, or work to implement governance changes in concert with the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle. Come help us decide what to do.

\*\*\* **HUMAN SEXUALITY / REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE** — contact **LAUREN CROCE**  
Whether you want to continue our important efforts for LBGQT and trans and non-binary folx, or work to make abortion and reproductive rights universally available again, there’s a lot we could be doing. Perhaps you want to expand our OWL (Our Whole Lives) program to our youngest R.E. group, or to work with our young adults expanding non-binary awareness. Or we could consider hosting “The Vagina Monologues” or open dialogue along the lines of Kitchen Table talks.

\*\*\* **SUPPORTING THE NEEDIEST** — contact **MARY BETH SEMINARIO**  
Adding to our on-going Wednesday Morning Breakfast, and other opportunities to support people who are unhoused or food insecure, we could look at ways to bolster our connection with the Amherst Survival Center, the need for a permanent shelter, and the movement for “Housing First”.

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Are we likely to do all these things? Very unlikely, but the ideas will be floating around for quite a few years. If there’s something you want us to do, you can get together with others and make it happen!  
If you sign up will you have to do the work? Absolutely NOT!! You would just be expressing interest in helping to make decisions. Let the leaders of any of the focus circles know of your interest – for now or for the future.  
And if you have questions about the broader focus of the Social Justice Coordinating Circle, contact me — **NAOMI YANIS**

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## Two New Members!

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Please welcome **Jyl Gentzler**, center, a longtime resident of Amherst, and **Jacob Torres**, a UU from Somerset MA here as a First Year student at UMass. **Jyl** signed our venerable Membership Book after the service on October 29. **Jake** would add his signature a few minutes later — we hope to have a photo of him to share in the future.

Many thanks to **Lauren Croce** for this image, which also includes (L-R) **Janis Gray**, **Rev. Rachael** and **John Gerber** witnessing the act.





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## Social Events

**Free Community Breakfast**, every Wednesday, 8:00 -10:00 A.M. in our Social Hall. Co-sponsored with Craig's Doors. *Volunteers welcome (Questions? contact Sophie Rogers)*, or just come to eat and chat!

**The Men's Breakfast**, our no-agenda Men's Group, meets each Wednesday at 7:00 A.M. at The Stables, 326 Russell St. (Route 9) in Hadley.

**The Women's Circle** is a supportive and social group of UUSA women 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!

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## Finance Committee

The **Finance Committee** will meet on **Monday, November 13, at 7:15 P.M. on Zoom.**

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## Religious Education Ministry

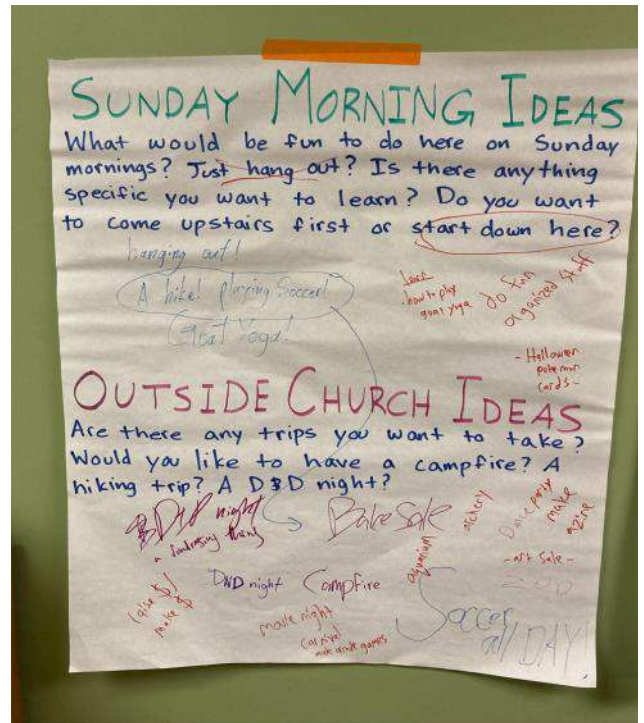


Religious Education Ministry is so excited to launch a new program on Sunday mornings: Junior Youth Group!

Junior Youth Group is aimed at those in our Religious Education program who have aged out of the elementary curriculum and are ready for more freedom and responsibilities within our congregation, roughly ages 10 to 15.

They met for the first time on Sunday, October 22 and had a great time coming up with ideas for the year together; they are excited about everything from campfires and movie nights to hiking and goat yoga.

If there is a youth in your life who falls roughly into this age range, we would love to have them join in on Sunday mornings! There is no need to come every Sunday, though we would love to see folks as often as they are able to come!



If you have any questions about the program or if you'd like to register a youth, please contact **Andrew Coate** at [dre@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:dre@uusocietyamherst.org)!

We need volunteers to keep this program running! If you're available to occasionally spend a Sunday morning with the Junior Youth Group, please get in touch with Andrew.

If volunteering on Sunday morning doesn't work with your schedule, we would also love some help with stocking snacks, helping chaperone any trips outside of Sunday morning hours, and occasionally prepping materials for the group. If you are interested in any or all of these tasks let **Andrew** know! We are so excited to build this program together this year.

*Left: Members of our new Junior Youth Group wait to add their ideas to the list shown above, during their October 22 brainstorming session.*

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## Our Caring Ministries



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. Other members are **Charlie Atwood, Rev. Rachael Hayes, Carol Johnson, and Pete Rogers**. Bidding you peace and love as we journey toward wholeness.

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## ION Corner

**Interfaith Opportunities Network (ION)** Our October meeting was held at the Hampshire Mosque as well as via Zoom. Much of the meeting was devoted to people sharing their grief over the deadly conflict between Hamas and Israel. We offered thoughts, readings and prayers for this grief, compassion and hope for peace.

Earlier this month, we sponsored a program on the town common to commemorate Orange Shirt Day: a day which publicizes the history of churches and the US government for deliberately robbing indigenous youth of their native identity at boarding schools they were forced to attend.

UUSA Representative to ION **Mary Beth Seminario**

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Join our friends November 5, 2:00 - 4:30 p.m., for an unusual matinee that offers a moment to gently pause, holding space for grief and life's wonder. Ticket price: sliding scale \$15 - \$35 (advance and door price are the same).

A benefit for the Hospice of the Fisher Home ([www.fisherhome.org](http://www.fisherhome.org)), Healing Waters is a curated selection of original stories told live from the stage by regular (extraordinary) people from our own community. Leaping past the boundaries of typical entertainments, this show is a journey through a landscape of loss, mourning, solace, and hope. We may sing a little together too.

This show is a collaboration between the Northeast Death Care Collaborative and Hospice of the Fisher Home, an independent nonprofit hospice organization providing a hospice residence and in-home end of life care in Franklin and Hampshire counties. Ticket link: <https://sheatheater.org/d/16935/Healing-Waters-stories-of-loss-mourning-solace-hope>

