

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



March 2024

Benefit concerts March 2 and 30!
(Page 5)

Pledge Drive begins (Page 3)

Second Friday Fun March 8!
(Page 6)

**Ever wondered about serving on our
Board of Trustees?**
(Page 3)

15 new adult members! (Page 5)

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 *Begins sabbatical April 1.*

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:

Eden Richardson 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

With appreciation and love for our memories of
John M. Foster, this newsletter's longtime
Production Editor.

Deadline for submissions: 20th of each month.
Email them to Copy Editor 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 attend our Sunday services in person. *As of this writing*, masks are again required, given a recent rise 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 depends 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, March 3, 10:30 A.M. – *We Are Enough, Together*
Atena O. Danner

Sunday, March 10, 10:30 A.M. – *All Except Frederick*
The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, March 17, 10:30 A.M. – *What to You is Wealth?*
Polly Peterson

In the dominant worldview today, wealth is measured in money and material possessions. How has this affected our relationship to the earth and our fellow beings? Is it time to shift the paradigm?

Sunday, March 24, 10:30 A.M. – *Love at the Center*
The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, March 31, 10:30 A.M. – *Easter*
The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Check out the 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 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.

The Dedicated Offerings for the month of March is for **Girls Inc. of the Valley**. Their Executive Director, Suzanne Parker (an Amherst resident), will address us on Sunday, March 3. Headquartered in Holyoke, their motto is “Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold.” They offer both school-year and summer programs, aimed at girls from 3rd through 12th grade, offering STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) as well as arts and crafts, dance, financial literacy and more. Girls Inc. empowers, edu-

cates, and guides young people forward, helping them navigate the challenges in their lives. The combination of **long-lasting mentoring relationships**, a **pro-girl environment**, and **research-based programming** equips youth to navigate gender, economic, and social barriers, and grow up **healthy, educated, and independent**.

We will report in a future newsletter what we raised in December for **Etta International, Empowerment through the Arts**; in January for **Reproductive Equity Now**; and in February for **Healing Across the Divides**. In September we raised \$1,000 for **UUA Disaster Relief Fund** to support the Montpelier VT UU congregation, which suffered a great loss when the Connecticut river flooded its building; in October \$1,175 for **Maui Strong** to support victims of the wildfires which devastated Lahaina in western Maui, Hawa; and in November \$850 for the **Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC)**.

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 a 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**.



PLEDGE DRIVE STARTS Sunday, March 3rd SAVE THE DATE!



Following the March 3rd service we will be holding a presentation on UUSA's proposed FY25 budget. Grab a coffee, tea or snack in the Willie Eaton Social Hall and then join us in the Sanctuary.

This is an opportunity to see how we're positioned for growth and ask questions before pledging for FY25. Pledge forms will be available at the service. For those unable to attend, they will be mailed to your home address.

Watch for details in the weekly announcements.

Childcare will be provided during the budget presentation.

Families with children: Childcare can be provided, but it helps to know ahead of time. Please email **Jacy** at preschool@uusocietyamherst.org to tell her how many kids she can expect.

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\

INVITATION FOR NOMINATIONS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Our congregation has spent considerable time reflecting on our relationships and what it means to belong to this spiritual community. Through our worship and work together, we are giving voice to the gifts we bring as well as the gifts we receive from this relationship.

As we approach our Annual Meeting in June, please consider if you, or someone you know, has leadership gifts to share in the form of service on the Board of Trustees.

Many members have shared that their connection to this community is rooted in their relationship to UU values, their participation in worship, RE, or their service to the UUSA. What fuels our connection is likely different for each person and maybe even over time for each individual.

Becoming a member of the Board of Trustees is an excellent opportunity to shape the direction and governance of our beloved community. If you have never served on a congregation or non-profit board, it is also a

chance to learn how to work collaboratively with an engaged, committed group of colleagues.

The Board of Trustees represents the congregation in shaping the vision, mission, and long-term goals of the congregation. The Board ensures the congregation is externally effective, internally efficient, and fiscally sound. Most of the Board of Trustees' time is spent discussing and planning for the future of the congregation. The Board writes governing policies for the congregation and understands the impact of those policies.

As we look to create a slate of nominees to serve on the Board of Trustees, to be elected in June, the LDC hopes members will look into themselves and see what connects them and what talent they could offer in this leadership role.

We have identified some personal qualities that are beneficial when serving on the Board of Trustees which include:

- listening deeply to one another
- willingness to be open minded
- willing to have assumptions questioned and change a position
- ability to commit
- ability to prepare
- supportive but willing to express an opinion
- inviting a healthy level of candor to the table.

If you see these qualities in yourself or others, please consider nominating someone or sharing your gifts as a member of the Board of Trustees. Serving on the board is a demonstration of commitment, not just to our current community, but to our future.

If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else for service on the Board please contact a member of the Leadership Development Committee by April 1: Sue Alexander, Lauren Croce, Louise Grosslein. We will be happy to discuss the work of the Board and provide you with further information.

Read the full Job Description [here](#).

Co-President's Letter

Growth at UUSA At our Annual Meeting in June 2023, the UUSA membership voted to “bet on ourselves” and support the recommendation of the board to increase the salaries of our amazing staff by using money we had in reserve to balance the budget and cover the increased costs. In the fall, members stepped up again to make a significant down payment on our siding loan.

In both cases, we knew that it only makes sense to make these investments if we believe that the congregation would grow in the long run.

I and all observing our New Member services on February 10 were very encouraged when we saw 15 adults sign the new member guestbook, along with a few of their kids. Overall, 17 new members have signed the book this year.

That is clear evidence that we have something attractive to offer the community and more growth is possible.

It is also evidence that our Ministry of Welcome and Membership is doing a wonderful job welcoming new visitors. People are “coming in the door” on Sunday mornings. New folks are coming in and enjoying being part of the community, and longtime members are returning after the pandemic.

Growth is not in-and-of-itself always the right goal for a congregation. However, I believe that it is a necessary one for UUSA at this time. Guidance from the UUA on the operations of a congregation puts us at the nexus between being a “pastoral” size and a “program” size congregation (If you'd like to dig into the details of these descriptions, look at the UUA document, [Size Transitions in UU Congregations](#)). In a nutshell, we have “program” size aspirations in terms of the type of impact we want to have on our members and community, but we're constrained by a budget and contributing membership that is more “pastoral” in nature.

There are two ways that we all can help encourage our growth and transition.

- Heed the call from our Committee on Welcoming and Membership to encourage both new and returning members to get involved in the life of the congregation. That is a responsibility for us all.
- Engage with the survey and conversations by the Committee of Shared Ministries as they guide us on the process of crafting our new mission. We need to take time to understand who we are culturally and then use what we learn to create a foundation for change.

Thank you for your past contributions to our community, and thank you in advance for making the commitment to our future, both financially and in welcoming the contributions of others.

Jeff Clark

New Members!



Welcome to the 15 new adult members of the UUSA who signed our Membership Book February 11:

Back row: **Kat Nowicki, Sarah Puckett, Michelle Medeiros, Pat Brinkman, Lisa Williams**

Middle Row: **Erik Barnes, Hilary Matheson, Larry Schwartz**

First Row: **Matt Holloway** (holding Freddy) & **Emily Holloway** (holding Lars), **Iris Solwat, Jess Rocheleau** (with Lyla), **Mimi Mayer, Grover** and **Nova Wehman-Brown** (with Ember)

Also pictured: **Janis Gray**, Keeper of the Book, and **Rev Rachael**

Social Events

Two concerts scheduled for March: **Saturday, March 2**, [Anne Louise and friends](#) and **Saturday, March 30**, Big Yellow Wooly Trousers. Doors open at 6:30; concert starts at 7:00 P.M.

Women's Circle 2nd and 4th Thursdays: The 2nd Thursday gathering is in person at the UUSA (Conference Room) and the 4th is on Zoom. This is an informal social group - no RSVP needed (*?s: contact Janis Gray or Lea*)

Men's Breakfast Wednesday mornings @ 7:00 A.M. (Stables Restaurant, Hadley). This is an informal social group—no need to RVSP, just show up! (*?s: contact Pete Rogers*)

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

Other events on page 6 and 8!

Second Friday Fun! is back **on Friday, March 8**. Those who attended in February had lots of fun! (We need an RSVP <https://forms.gle/6Z7vLuYcGHQtQ78w5> by **March 6** so we can get the right amount of pizza!). Thanks!



Music Notes

Brenda Miller, Music Director, reporting:

Hello, everyone! With so many Snowbirds and other circumstances, the choir took a short hiatus in February and is planning to start up BIG in March as we prepare for Easter Sunday on March 31 and Music Sunday, May 19.

Many thanks to all of those who have filled in to lead hymns, sing and play special pieces in services! A special shout-out to **Sarah Puckett**, pianist extraordinaire, who has joined our fold and filled in while I was away and then flu-ridden!

If you don't know Sarah, please take a moment to introduce yourself to her. She is a delightful person and a fine musician!

Also thanks to **Fran, Kat, Louise, Maura, Jyl, Alyson** and **Carolyn Cave** for holding down the musical fort. And to **Jason** for that fun rendition of Blackbird by the Beatles a few weeks back!

CHOIR NEWS!!

I know that some people are just chomping at the bit to be in the choir! NOW is your chance!

REHEARSALS begin Sunday, March 3 at 8:45-10:00 A.M. before Sunday services. Please come say hello to me in the meantime, and I will make sure to have your email for communications. Or just show up beginning March 3 at 8:45 A.M.

If YOU NEED CHILD CARE, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you!

MUSIC SUNDAY will be May 19, 2024! I am working on developing the music for that day. The more people singing, the better!!! The repertoire will depend on the numbers of people and distribution of voices. So let me know ASAP if you're in!!

We will also be singing in some other services in March, April, May and June. Our main focus will be Easter and Music Sunday.

Also, if you would like to share a musical talent during a service, please let me know and we can discuss where it would fit in nicely. Thanks so much for entrusting the musical part of our journey to my leadership. It is my honor and pleasure to be of service to you all.

Brenda

A letter from Rev. Rachael to the UUSA Community

Dear UUSA,

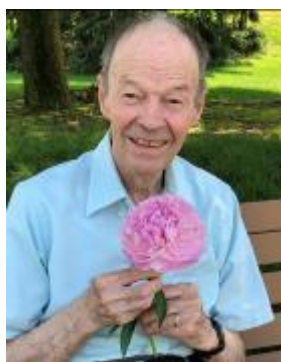
March is going to be a beautiful month at UUSA. There are two concerts and another Second Friday Fun. We'll hold a memorial service for our beloved member **John Foster**. Sunday services will include sermons by Atena O. Danner (author of *Incantations for Rest*) and our own **Polly Peterson**; the choir will pick up again this month as well. Save the date for a special Maundy Thursday dinner church service on March 28.

I hope to see you at these services and events. (Nobody has to go to everything, but I hope you'll come to something!) Our congregation is feeling robust and exciting these days, and this has a lot to do with the ways that you are building community with one another.

My sabbatical will begin on April 1st. If you would like to connect before I go, please set up a meeting with me (calendly.com/revrachael).

In faith,

Rev. Rachael



John M. Foster

Amherst, MA - John McGaw Foster died of natural causes on January 4, 2024 at the age of 95 at the Elaine Center in Hadley. Born in 1928, he grew up in Swarthmore, PA. After graduating from high school, he attended Swarthmore College, majoring in chemistry. There he met his true love, **Nancy Abbott**. They married in 1951.

Following graduation, John attended Harvard University Medical School, earning a PhD in Biochemistry in 1954. After a two-year postdoc at MIT, he was commissioned as a 1st Lieutenant in the US Army in 1956. He and his family were sent to Kawasaki, Japan, where he was in charge of a medical laboratory .

After military service, John joined the faculty of Boston University in 1958, where he taught and did research for eight years. Next, he spent three years with the National Science Foundation in Washington, DC, evaluating innovative undergraduate programs in biology, which fed his love for college-level teaching. In fall, 1969, he joined the founding faculty of Hampshire College as an associate professor. It was his dream job: Hampshire emphasizes hands-on, experiential learning, often in an interdisciplinary setting. John thrived there, and his programs were popular with students. He retired in 1994 as a full professor after 25 years of dedicated service.

He and Nancy then embarked on a series of outdoor adventures and foreign travels, including backpacking in the Rockies, rafting down the Grand Canyon, and visiting countries as far-flung as China, South Africa, and New Zealand. In 2009, they moved into the Applewood retirement community, which sustained John for 13 years after Nancy passed away in 2010.

John loved the natural world and enjoyed hiking and camping with his family. He also loved classical music and played recorder for many years. He became an enthusiastic member of the Valley Light Opera, contributing in many ways both on stage and off. He also sang with the Berkshire Choral Festival. He was a skilled whitewater canoeist, and he and Nancy often paddled together through rapids. They were both active in the Unitarian Church their entire married life. John served on two ministerial search committees at UUSA, sang and played instruments with the choir, designed and laid out the monthly newsletter, and served as Treasurer on our Board. Throughout the years, John was known for his wry sense of humor, his storytelling ability, and his many puns. He was a generous mentor to his students and a kind and loving husband and father.

John is survived by his son Jeffrey Foster and daughter-in-law Debra Jaqua of Olympia, WA, his daughter Lorena (Lorie) Healy and son-in-law John Healy of Amherst, and grandsons Matthew Denny and Patrick Foster.

Donations may be made in John's memory to the Valley Light Opera or the Massachusetts Audubon Society. A memorial service will be held at our UU Society on Saturday, March 2 at 2 P.M.

Shingle Mingle Registers Cha-chings

The results are in! The fall fundraiser to pay off a chunk of our siding loan was a success. We raised more than \$42,000.

The Board has agreed to the Finance Committee's proposal to pay down our loan from Florence Bank by \$82,000 by combining the \$50,000 already committed from reserves with \$32,000 of the shingle funds received to date.

As a result of being able to significantly pay down our loan, *we are able to cut our monthly loan payments in FY25 almost in half.* We had originally borrowed \$173,942 on a 20-year loan, and we're paying \$1,188 per month out of reserves this fiscal year. In FY'25, loan payments of approximately \$645/month will be part of the annual budget.

For more background on the whole siding project, [click here](#).

Thank you for your generosity! It has paid off (or at least the loan is partially paid off).



Finance Committee

The **Finance Committee** will meet on **Monday, March 11, at 7:15 P.M. on Zoom.**

Our Caring Ministries



Please let Caring Team leaders **Fran Plumer** or **Catharine Porter** know if you or someone you know would like a phone call or visit, perhaps a ride or a meal. Our mission is to see that no one goes unnoticed and everyone in our community gets the help they need. Other team members are **Charlie Atwood, Pete Rogers, Carol Johnson, Rob Fuderich, Rev. Rachael Hayes, Jeanne Ballantine, Carolyn Cave, Mary Latham, Linda Callahan, Sophie Hermann, Lynn Sussman, Kate Dahlstedt, Gordon Wyse, Lauren Croce, Karen Mack.**

Social Action



Not Bread Alone — On March 24, Not Bread Alone, a local soup kitchen, needs our help to serve lunch to community members. Can you help? Cooks are needed from 9:30 - 12; servers 11:45 - 1:30 and clean-uppers 12 - 2. Meet new people and have fun. Every Saturday volunteers work together to create tasty dishes. Not Bread Alone is located in the lower rear of First Congregational Church in Amherst with access off Spring St. For information contact **Mary Beth Seminario**. THANK YOU!

ION Corner

The Interfaith Opportunities Network (ION) February meeting was held at South Congregational Church in Amherst. This meeting was very introspective, as we spent most of our time reflecting upon how we can be better interfaith companions. The conversation will continue as we try to better understand the perspectives of each other's faiths and invite other faiths to join us.

Respectfully,
Mary Beth Seminario (UUSA representative to ION)

ANNIE PATTERSON & FIERY HOPE

A fundraiser concert for the Movement Voter Project

Sunday, Mar 10th 2024 • 3 - 5pm



Unitarian Society of Northampton & Florence
220 Main St, Northampton, MA



ANNIE PATTERSON
with Peter Blood

Annie Patterson is co-editor of the folk-song bible *Rise Up Singing*. Professional vocalist, instrumentalist & songleader, Annie has performed around the globe for over 40 years. Special guest Peter Blood will join her for this concert.

www.riseupandsing.org/annie



FIERY HOPE
Directed by Eveline MacDougall

Fiery Hope evolved from the Amandla Chorus, founded in 1988 by Eveline MacDougall. They sing for justice, joy, and community-building, and have collaborated with Nelson Mandela, Malala Yousafzai, Cesar Chavez, Pete Seeger and other wonderful leaders and mentors.

<https://fieryhope.org>

Join us for an afternoon of inspiration, empowerment, & rejuvenation through song and support of a great organization that's moving justice forward and turning out the vote at the grassroots level!

TICKETS - sliding scale donation \$0-100 • **INFO** - usnfthevote@uunorthampton.org

Advanced Tickets: <https://riseupandsing.org/events>

Tickets available at the door - No one turned away for lack of funds