

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



April 2024

**You are Invited to a
Social Supper on April 6
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**New Book Group Forming
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**Support Hampshire Pride May 4!
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**Join the Choir — and Rehearse
for a Fun Music Sunday.
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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 *On Sabbatical until August*

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

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

Deadline for submissions: 20th of each month.
Email them to Copy Editor Janis Gray (contact
Lea in the office if you need her email ad-
dress).

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. Sub-
missions 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 optional, given a 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, April 7, 10:30 A.M. – *Learning from Anger*

Jennie Mack with Robin Livingston

Sunday, April 14, 10:30 A.M. – *The Case for Decorative Plates*

Andrew Coate, Director of Religious Education

Whether it's hanging decorative plates or seasonal hand towels that are only for company, planting purely decorative flowers in addition to subsistence crops, or sending “just because” cards to friends when you see something you know they'd love, we all do little things that bring us joy. Let's make the case for occasional frivolity.

Sunday, April 21, 10:30 A.M. – *Spiritually Grounding when the Ground is Unsteady*

The Rev. Jo Murphy with The UUSA Green Sanctuary Committee

As we are bombarded by trauma on the daily news, many are looking for ways to ground and be in community with each other. As climate change ramps up and our world may feel unsteady, how do we steady ourselves? What are the tools we as UU's have, and what are the tools we need yet to gather? Today we will explore what we already have and what we can seek out to ground ourselves in a world that may be broken, but is also so very strong and beautiful.

Sunday, April 28, 10:30 A.M. – *Weaving and Wending - Celebrating Beltane*

Andrew Coate, Director of Religious Education

As we move through the world we weave our lives in with all that is around us, interlocking and joining and growing apart and together as our own tapestry lengthens in our wake. From the Norns of Norse mythology to Greece's Athena, the Mayan goddess Ixchel, Lithuania's Laima-Dalia, ancient Egypt's Neith, and Spider Woman of Diné tradition, weaving and spinning are seen as sacred work of women, weaving lives and fates and entire worlds. This year for Beltane we will honor the Earth as we dive into how we weave our own small part of this worldwide and generations-long tapestry.



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 April are for **Dakin Humane Society** in Springfield, an organization that is probably well known to many UUSA members.

Dakin Humane Society is a 501 (c) (3) community-supported animal welfare organization that provides shelter, medical care, and spay/neuter services to more than 20,000 animals each year. [Since its inception in 1969](#), Dakin has become one of the most recognized nonprofit organizations in the Pioneer Valley and a national leader in animal welfare.

They offer a wide variety of services to pets and their owners, including providing pet food to local food banks, and low cost medical care for pets. Their Board President, Tiffany Appleton, will be joining us on Sunday, April 7 to explain their services.

Their address is 171 Union St, Springfield, MA 01105; phone 413-781-4000.

In December, our Dedicated Offerings raised \$900 for **Etta International, Empowerment through the Arts**. In January, we raised \$1,000 for **Reproductive Equity Now**. We will report in a future newsletter what we raised 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**.



Social Events

Our next Social Supper is to be hosted by **Karen (and Bo) Mack** of the Ministry of Welcome and Membership at their home on Saturday, April 6 from 5 - 8:30 P.M.

Men's Breakfast at 7 A.M. each Wednesday, at Stables Restaurant, Hadley. This is an informal group - no need to "RSVP"- just show up (?s: *contact Pete Rogers*)

Women's Circle at Noon on 2nd Thursday of each month (in person in conference room) and at Noon on 4th Thursday on Zoom. To subscribe to this group and receive reminders, email: uusa-women+subscribe@uusocietyamherst.org

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

New Book Group forming! All are invited to join. Books have been chosen for the first two meetings, but all are welcome to make suggestions for future selections. Bring your lunch and join us at Noon in the conference room:

Tuesday, April 23: *The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet* by Becky Chambers

Tuesday, May 21: *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid

Questions? Email, call or text **Nancy Hunter**.



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!

Co-President’s Letter

Spiritual Grounding When the Ground is Unsteady

April brings us Earth Day on the 22nd each year. As many people say with holidays that commemorate significant figures or moments in history, “Shouldn’t every day be Earth Day?”

Does a day on the calendar do enough to recognize our fathers, our mothers, or women in general? Having a month for Black History is good, but obviously inadequate. When we merged Washington’s and Lincoln’s birthdays into one Presidents Day, it implied that it recognized all Presidents. Really? No disrespect, but are they all worthy of a holiday?

So, back to Earth Day. It was started to bring awareness to how we were fouling our waters and air. It was a recognition of a public health crisis, and led to major US legislation that helped to curb the worst of our polluting practices. As time marched on, however, we have found ourselves in a crisis that is more existential than simply cleaning up the Connecticut River or reducing asthma-inducing smog in Springfield.

People have been aware of the coming climate crisis for a long time. In 1896, a scientific paper by Sweden’s Svante Arrhenius first predicted that changes in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels could substantially alter the earth’s surface temperature through the greenhouse effect. Ever since then, the warnings keep coming – right up to the recent dire predictions from the UN’s Conference of the Parties.

As we are bombarded by the trauma of the warnings in the daily news, we look for ways to ground and be in community with each other. How can we honor our 7th principle, having “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”?

There are countless groups working on the issue, from the young members of the Sunrise Movement to Elders Climate Action and Third Act. Our own Green Sanctuary Committee has been working on building awareness and taking action since 2007.



Trying to take substantive action on climate change policies and our own individual practices can feel like banging our heads against the wall. So much work, and yet so little is getting done to meet the crisis.

In our Earth Day service on April 21, we will explore what we already have and what we can seek out to ground ourselves in a world that may be broken, but still very strong and beautiful. The service will be led by our Green Sanctuary Committee with a sermon and other contributions from Rev. Jo Murphy of UU MassAction.

As Rev. Murphy has said, “As climate change ramps up and our world feels unsteady, how do we steady ourselves? What are the tools we as UU’s have? What are the tools we still need yet to gather?”

Please join us on the 21st (and every day) to explore how we can honor the earth.

In Community,
Jeff Clark
Co-President, Board of Trustees

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.

Social Action



Join your UUSA friends in the Hampshire Pride Parade Saturday, May 4. We will gather again as a group at Sheldon Field (277 Bridge Street in Northampton) at 10:30 A.M. (Just look for our UUSA banner!). The parade starts at 11:00 A.M., descending down Bridge Street to Main Street, taking a left on Crafts Avenue and right onto Old South Street to the festival grounds.

Hope you can make it...bring the family — a fun time will be had by all. Questions? Call or text **Helen Blatz**.



Music Notes



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

REHEARSALS begin Sundays at 8:45-10:00 A.M. before services. Please come say hello to me in the meantime, and I will make sure to have your email for communications. 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 April, May and June. 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 Miller, Music Director

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.**

Finance Committee

Only a total eclipse can keep them away! Please note that in a departure from the norm, the **Finance Committee** will meet on **TUESDAY, APRIL 9, at 7:15 P.M. on Zoom.**

Usually we meet on the second Monday of the month, but the second Monday in April is the 8th, which is the day of the eclipse, and several committee members were planning to be away for that.



Religious Education Ministry



For Our Youth and Young Adults, April 21 at 1 P.M. Tour at the [David Ruggles Center](#) (head count needed, please RSVP!). The DRC is a local history and education organization. In collaboration with the Mt. Holyoke UU student group, we have a guided tour planned for 4/21 at 1pm, focusing on UU connections to the [Northampton Association of Education and Industry](#). We need to get an accurate head count so please let **Robin Livingston** know if you are interested in attending.

ION Corner

Interfaith Opportunities Network (ION) At its March 21 meeting held both online and at the Mt. Toby Meetinghouse, ION responded to a request from the **Valley Interfaith Refugee Action Group (VIRAG)** to help them raise enough money to purchase 100 \$50 gift cards by April 30 by donating \$100. ION agreed to make this contribution because it furthers our mission, members of our congregations are part of VIRAG and the need is dire.

These gift cards will be distributed through the three local resettlement agencies to migrant individuals and families who lack employment authorization or a clear path to citizenship. They have fled desperate situations, many living in motels or temporary housing. ION encourages its member congregations to support this effort. Contributors can make checks to Edwards Church with a note on the memo of the check saying "VIRAG Gift Cards" and mail or deliver them to Edwards Church, 297 Main St., Northampton, MA 01060. Please write "Attention: VIRAG" on the outside of the envelope.

SPECIAL EVENTS of interfaith interest noted at the March ION meeting:

Sunday, April 7, 3 P.M. As part of South Congregational Church's 200th Anniversary Celebration Series, there will be an **organ recital** at the church in Amherst by internationally recognized Nathan Laube. Free-will donation; \$20 per person suggested.

Wednesday, April 10, 7-9 P.M. at Leverett Elementary School, Leverett. As part of Leverett Congregational Church's 250 Anniversary Celebration talk "**Recovering Native History along the Kwantekw (Connecticut)**"

Mark Your Calendars!!
Leverett 250th Anniversary
Featured Presentation



Wobanaki Lifeways c. 1600. Illustration by Francis Back 2004,
with permission from the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA.

**“Recovering Native Histories Along the
Kwinitekw (Connecticut River)”**

Talk by Dr. Margaret M. Bruchac
Prof. Emerita, University of Pennsylvania

This talk will discuss the histories of Indigenous Native American communities in the homelands known as Nonotuck (now Northampton, Hatfield, Hadley), and Pocumtuck (now Deerfield, Greenfield, Leverett), from the 1600s to the present. Case histories offer insights into colonial encounters, conflicts, deeds, medicinal knowledges, and Indigenous survival strategies over time.

April 10, 2024, 7-9 pm

Leverett Elementary School, 85 Montague Road, Leverett

Free Admission

*Sponsored by On Native Land: Leverett Advocacy and Education Group
and Mt. Toby Meeting of Friends*