THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER
121 North Pleasant Street, P.O. Box 502, Amherst Massachusetts 01004

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

Annual Meeting after June 9 Service — stay tuned for details!

UUSA puts values to work in support of Haitian orphanage (see page 4)

Sunday services on summer hiatus after June 23 until August.
See page 6 for other ways to be together!

June 2024
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](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](https://www.uusocietyamherst.org/covid_policy).

Sunday, June 2, 10:30 a.m. – Religious Education Milestones
Andrew Coate, Director of Religious Education
Religious Education will celebrate important milestones in the lives of the children of our congregation, as well as life milestones in the wider congregation.

Sunday, June 9, 10:30 a.m. – Flower Ceremony and Annual Meeting
Alyson Bull and Robin Livingston
We celebrate and honor the Flower Ceremony, “an annual ritual that celebrates beauty, human uniqueness, diversity, and community.” Please bring a flower with you, either on Zoom or in person. After the service we will hold our Annual Meeting.

Sunday, June 16, 10:30 a.m. – Radical Welcome | End of the 2023-2024 Worship Season
Zr. Alex Kapitan
In today’s world, being a Welcoming Congregation requires more than simply opening our doors. We are at a crucial turning point—will we live into our commitment to be a home for all those who need Unitarian Universalism? Doing so will require a welcome that transforms our hearts, our congregation, and ultimately our world. In this service, guest speaker Zr. Alex Kapitan, a queer and trans UU leader, will preach on what it will take to embody this sort of welcome—a radical welcome that can ultimately transform us all.

Sunday, June 23, time TBD – General Assembly Worship Service
We are planning to stream the General Assembly Worship Service in the Sanctuary and on Zoom – more details forthcoming.

In July we will not hold services at UUSA. More info about online services at other congregations to come. We will start services again in August upon Rev. Rachael’s return from sabbatical. August services will be simpler, with readings and meditations in the place of sermons as we ease our way back into another worship year.

Check out the UUSA YouTube Channel!
Original content from our Sunday services is uploaded to our website, [uusocietyamherst.org](http://uusocietyamherst.org), with optional closed captioning! To view them, click [here](http://uusocietyamherst.org) — 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 months of May and June are for the **Movement Voter Fund (MVF)**. The Movement Voter Fund is a 501(c)3 organization that supports grassroots groups working to advance democracy, equity, and sustainability in the United States.

- Grassroots groups collectively deploy tens of thousands of local voter organizers.
- These groups engage tens of millions of voters, with a focus on the most disenfranchised.
- They win major policy changes on every issue, yet rarely get the resources they deserve.
- Funders face a conundrum: Who has time to research and vet hundreds of local groups?

This is where the MVF steps in by researching hundreds of groups to find the ones that have the most impact. Since 2016, MVF has moved tens of millions of nonpartisan dollars to hundreds of groups in over 40 states, securing hundreds of policy and budgetary victories at the federal, state, and local level — and hundreds of billions in federal funds for clean energy, poverty reduction, and more.

Let’s do our part by supporting local organizations to create effective change in neighborhoods where it’s most needed.

In December, our Dedicated Offerings raised $900 for **Etta International, Empowerment through the Arts**. In January, we raised $1,000 for **Reproductive Equity Now**. In February, we raised $1,100 for **Healing Across the Divides**, and in March we raised $1,200 for **Girls Inc. of the Valley**. We will report in a future newsletter what we raised in April for **Dakin Humane Society**.

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](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.

Co-President’s Letter

Dear UUSA,

Sometimes a leap of faith lands you in a good place. Last year, we took a leap of faith by supporting our staff with an overdue Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) and fully funding our programs by drawing over $36,000 from our cash reserves.

The result is a healthy and growing congregation, highlighted by a record gain of 21 new adult and 5 youth members over the past year. That is truly outstanding.

What did new and old members witness over the past year to give us confidence in the future of our congregation? Here are a few of the highlights:

- We created a COVID policy that gave us the flexibility to respond to local infection rates and hold most of our services in person, while continuing our on-line broadcasts.
- Our Social Justice Jubilee gathered over 30 members to re-energize our justice work on issues such as reproductive rights, the environment, democracy, dismantling oppression and caring for the neediest.
- The Ministry of Welcome and Membership in collaboration with Lea developed practices that made new visitors feel welcome and encouraged their future engagement.
- Our Shingle Mingle fundraiser helped us pay down a significant portion of the loan for re-siding the meet-
inghouse and enable us to fit our loan payments into the operating budget.

- The Religious Education program attracted many new families with dozens of young ones.
- We sponsored small groups, book groups, concerts and more to help make connections and build community.
- We demonstrated our commitment to providing for justice and compassion for those in need by helping the Trust Funds for All Children support the Foyer Angelique Orphanage in Haiti. [See next article for more information.]
- The staff and volunteers stepped up to enable the Rev. Rachael Hayes to take a well-deserved sabbatical.
- Our Worship Collaborative, Andrew Coates and several other members provided enriching, thought-provoking services throughout the year, but particularly during Rev. Rachael’s sabbatical.
- We held an auction that raised over $6,500 and created a formula for future successful fundraising efforts.
- And more …

That is all on top of the fact that we are blessed with an exceptional staff who bring us powerful sermons, beautiful music, progressive religious education, and effective communications and management. We are encouraged that the congregation passed a budget for next year that requires a much smaller leap of faith. By drawing roughly $13,000 from reserves, we can provide salary adjustments to meet the UUA Fair Compensation Guidelines and fully fund our programs and services. We have faith that the growing membership will enable us to deliver future balanced budgets without touching reserves. Our future is bright given our members’ dedication and the impact we can make on our little part of the world.

In Community,
Jeff Clark, Co-President

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UUSA to Partner with Trust Funds for All Children in support of Haitian orphanage

The UUSA Board of Trustees approved a request to assist the Trust Funds for All Children in helping to send funds that they have raised for the Foyer Angelique Orphanage in Haiti.

The Trust Funds for All Children, Inc. (TFAC) is a 501c3 charitable organization that has been supporting the orphanage for over 10 years. The orphanage is run by Pastor Duckens Janvier and has 28 children left of the original 45. TCAF has been supporting the orphans for more than 10 years, until they graduate from high school.

TFAC is not currently able to send money to support the Foyer Evangelique Orphanage in Haiti. Gangs have overtaken the orphanage, school, and Pastor Duckens has arranged other housing and facilities for the children. Also, TFAC cannot get receipts acceptable to their auditors for maintaining 501c3 status. Pastor Duckens can only buy food on the street and TFAC staff and volunteers cannot journey to Haiti to get the receipts and make sure all is in order. They are, however, in constant communication via WhatsApp.

TFAC raises approximately $100,000 each year from Pastor Duckens and the children of Foyer Angelique Orphanage in 2019.
many small donors in Western Mass and Southern Vermont. The funds that they raise will be transferred to the UUSA and then we will wire the money to Pastor Duckens. UUSA will be able to cover our administrative costs by taking 5% of the total or whatever we deem appropriate.

In discussions during the March and April board meetings, and with Rev. Rachael, we believed that this was an opportunity to put our values to work and apply our second principle; providing for justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Conditions in Haiti are deplorable, and we can help ensure a future for the 28 children in Foyer Evangelique Orphanage.

However, it’s also an opportunity to do more than act as agent to transfer money. We may also want to include the orphanage in an upcoming dedicated offering or other fundraising effort. This arrangement is currently set for a year, and the Board will be getting regular updates to ensure funds are being received and used appropriately.

If you have any questions about TFAC or the orphanage, please feel free to contact the Board at board@uusocietyamherst.org.

**Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee will meet on **Monday, June 10, at 7:15 p.m.** on Zoom.

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**SAVE THE DATE**

UUSA 2024 Annual Meeting and Election of Officers after the June 9 service! Watch your email for details.
**Music Notes**

On May 19, Music Sunday returned for the first time since 2019. Led by Brenda Miller, our choir and other musicians presented works by Felix Mendelssohn and his sister, Fanny Hansel, as well as background on the two composers’ lives.

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**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, Jeanne Ballantine, Carolyn Cave, Mary Latham, Linda Callahan, Sophie Herrmann, Lynn Sussman, Kate Dahlstedt, Gordon Wyse, Lauren Croce, Karen Mack.

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**Social Events**

**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.

**Book Group** Tuesday, June 18 at noon in the conference room. Our next book is *Perestroika in Paris* by Jane Smiley. All are invited to join. Bring your lunch and join us! Questions? Email, call or text Nancy Hunter.

**In the works:** a UUSA Community Potluck Picnic in mid August! Details to come . . .