

# THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**May 2024**

**Hampshire Pride Parade and  
Festival May 4  
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**Talent & Treasures Auction  
in person May 10  
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**4th International Convocation of UU  
Women & People of Progressive Faiths  
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**Adult Adventures at Unirondack!  
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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](mailto:revrachael@uusocietyamherst.org) *On Sabbatical until August*

### **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**

### **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

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*



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

### **Sunday, May 5, 10:30 A.M. – *The Three Questions***

**Alyson Bull with Anne Louise White**

A story sermon service inspired by the picture book *The Three Questions* by Jon Muth, based on a short story by Leo Tolstoy.

### **Sunday, May 12, 10:30 A.M. – *Grazia: Art Making Life Extraordinary***

**Anne Louise White**

The arts “act as a salutary shot in the arm to pull us out of our daily dullness and remind us of how intensely rich human experience can be.” (Anthony Rooley) Today we will explore how the arts reveal the extraordinary to be found in seemingly ordinary moments, and how the arts forge a deep sense of connection with other beings and with our world. Join us and learn about “Sprezzatura!”

### **Sunday, May 19, 10:30 A.M. – *Music Sunday!***

**Brenda Miller**, Music Director, with our **Choir** and **Other Musicians**

We will be presenting music by Felix Mendelssohn and his sister, Fanny Mendelssohn Hansel. Members of the choir will also be providing background information during the service on these composers’ music and their lives.

### **Sunday, May 26, 10:30 A.M. – *Ferdinand’s Refusal***

**Robin Livingstone with Jennie Mack**

*The Story of Ferdinand* is beloved by many generations, and has wisdom to offer in how we refuse systems that mean to do us harm.

### **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!

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## Dedicated Offerings

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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>. 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**.

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### Saturday, May 4: Hampshire Pride Parade and Festival!

Both UUSA and USNF (Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence) are walking this year, so come join us at Sheldon Field between 10:30 and 11 am to get lined up!





## Talent & Treasures: UUSA FUN(d)raiser!



It's back by popular demand ;) **The Talent & Treasures Auction will be a hybrid event with an online catalog and an all-ages in-person event on Friday, May 10 from 5-8 PM.** Woohoo! Let's have some fun with each other and raise funds for our beloved UUSA at the same time! We need your services, crafts, or skills for the auction ASAP! While **forms** were officially due April 30, please still think about what you could contribute. Need some ideas? How about one of the following, or have a look at [this expansive list to get you thinking!](#) or any idea YOU may have:

Help with gardening for 2+ hours

Host a dinner for 6-8 people in your home (or elsewhere — even outside in summer!

Teach singing, painting, pottery, woodworking, knitting, quilting, tutoring, writing

Offer entertainment for a birthday (or other) party

Provide tickets to an event—symphony, ballgame...

Offer a weekend at a vacation home

Buy a gift certificate to a local business for auctioning

Our goal for this fundraiser is \$5,000 (about \$50 per household). We'd love for you to participate by donating item(s) and bidding on auction offerings – but if you can't any donation would be appreciated. Donations can be made by check (payable to UUSA with "Auction" in the memo line, or online - select Donation - Auction from the drop down menu).

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## Social Events

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**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](mailto: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**, May 21 at noon in the conference room. All are invited to join. *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid has been chosen as our read for May, but all are welcome to make suggestions for future selections. Bring your lunch and join us! Questions? Email, call or text **Nancy Hunter**.

**Breath, Body, and Sound: Embodied Singing as a Mindfulness Practice Thursday, May 16 at 6 pm** in the sanctuary. Explore the practices of song & mantra in Breath, Body, and Sound. Bringing awareness to your body as a musical instrument through mindful call and response singing, learn tools to integrate sound and mantra into your daily life as an embodied mindfulness practice. This guided class by UUSA member **Kat Now(icki)** will include group singing in English and Sanskrit as a meditative practice, breathing exercises, and gentle body awareness suggestions. Absolutely no singing experience is necessary to benefit from this class, only the willingness to experience the healing sensation of making music and feeling its resonance in your body.

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## We have two new members!

A warm welcome to **Maddie Adams** and **Daniel Nicolai**, who signed our Membership Book on April 20. They live in Northampton.

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## Co-President's Letter

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### Ministry in Governance

One of the first books I read when I joined the UUSA Board of Trustees nearly three years ago was *Governance and Ministry* by Dan Hotchkiss. This reference is a standard read for board leaders of many faiths and helped ground me in the work of the board. About the same time there was a minor kerfuffle within the congregation about the word “ministry.” Some of us seemed to want to reserve the word ministry for the designated minister, and others saw the work of our many committees as “ministering” to the congregation. Personally, I believe that everything we do is ministry.

I have come to understand ministry as service. In our case, it would be service consistent with UU Principles and Values. One of my problems with the Dan Hotchkiss book is that it seems to imply that “governance” and “ministry” are two separate functions. But this is changing as the feature article in the most recent issue of UU World titled “*Shared Ministry Helps UU Communities Thrive*” suggests.

The other book I read (yes, I’m a bit of a book nerd) early in my tenure on the board was adrienne maree brown’s modern classic, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. This is a deeply spiritual book that offers us hope for a better world. Brown guides us toward strategic and radical change in our institutions and our lives in ways that are consistent with our 8<sup>th</sup> Principle (to dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions). One of her teachings is called intentional adaptation.

We all adapt to changing conditions, often as a knee-jerk reaction to an unexpected crisis (like a pandemic) or stress (like a budget shortfall). The key to “intentional adaptation” is to change in response to changing conditions while holding tightly to our mission, but not necessarily to specific pre-conceived outcomes. Rather than following a “five-year plan” we must “build the road while walking.” Strategies that result in success will emerge in non-linear, iterative, and perhaps unexpected ways. It requires faith. It requires hope. It requires love.

This sounds like “ministry” to me.

This past year, one of the adaptations that we have experimented with on the UUSA Board of Trustees is the practice of [sociocracy](#), known in UUA circles as dynamic governance. Those of us familiar with the competitive, rough and tumble form of governance known as New England Town Meeting guided by Robert’s Rules, benefited from learning a different way to deliberate and make decisions. It has been an interesting and gratifying experiment. We are still learning.

I see sociocracy as a means of intentional adaptation for UU’s. Sociocracy is deeply embedded in a commitment to the worth and dignity of every person (First Principle), justice, equity, and compassion (Second Principle), the search for truth and meaning (Fourth Principle), and as mentioned, it allows us to practice our Eighth Principle. Sociocracy has helped us practice governance as a form of ministry.

If any UUSA committee, ministry, team, or circle wants to learn more about how the tools of sociocracy might help you in your own work, please contact me to arrange a consultation with members of the UUSA [Sociocracy Support Circle](#). It’s another form of ministry.

In community,

John Gerber; co-president

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

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## Finance Committee

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



UUSA's **Pat Brinkman** wants you to know about this opportunity! She writes, "I really want to go. I have not registered yet — but would love it if some other women from UUSA would want to go as well. Kolozsvár (aka Cluj-Napoca to the Romanians....) is a wonderful city - also a college town — except just 1000 years older than Amherst...(or more. Don't really know....)."

**Fourth International Convocation of  
Unitarian Universalist Women and People of Progressive Faiths  
September 5–8, 2024 Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár, Romania**

***Organized by the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women and UNOSZ, the National Organization of Unitarian Women of Romania. In partnership with the Hungarian Unitarian Church.***

Come join women and supporters of gender equity from around the world in the historic Unitarian region of Transylvania!

**Theme: "Weaving a Tapestry of Peace and New Perspectives"**

**Connect – Collaborate – Create**

The Convocation will focus on the collective need for peace within ourselves and in our communities as we search for ways to respond to intersecting global crises and uncertainties. The event will also be an opportunity to determine how to be more effective change-makers, weaving our own threads of equity into a tapestry of a peaceful and sustainable tomorrow.

**The event will feature:**

- Various expert speakers from around the world
- Workshops and creative expression
- Chalice circles
- Social events for fun and fellowship
- Visit to the House of Religious Freedom, one of the oldest and most significant 15th-century townhouses; once the residence of the Unitarian bishops, now a cultural center dedicated to the ideals of religious freedom and tolerance.



**Register for the 4th Convo!**

The \$390.00 registration fee includes three (3) lunches, the opening reception, coffee and refreshments, access to event sessions, Convo materials, and evening entertainment. Attendees from Romania and Hungary will have separate registration available through the Hungarian Unitarian Church and UNOSZ.

**Paying with credit card, Paypal, or bank transfer, use this [4th Convo ONLINE Registration Form](#).**

**Paying by check?** Print and mail the [4th Convo PDF Registration Form](#) with your check.

**Paying via bank transfer in EUROS?** Please see details below.

**Applying for Scholarship?** Also fill out [4th Convo Scholarship Application](#)

Can't attend? **GIVE** to the [4th Convo Scholarship Fund](#)

**Find additional information at [4th Convo 2024 September \(intl womensconvo.org\)](http://intl womensconvo.org)**, such as preliminary program schedule, accommodation options, pre-tour details, accessibility, etc. If you have questions, please contact

## Adult Adventure Trips at Unirondack!

**Unirondack is a summer camp and conference center founded by Unitarian Universalists that has been serving UU youth and adults in the Adirondacks for more than 70 years.**

This year we are offering a whole new selection of adventure programs for adults! These programs offer full guided service throughout the Adirondacks including food and cooking, logistics planning, and the major equipment as well. For more information, you can email [Sam.B@unirondack.org](mailto:Sam.B@unirondack.org), or check out our website at [www.unirondack.org/trip-camps](http://www.unirondack.org/trip-camps)

### Unirondack's Spring 2024 Adult Trip Calendar:

May 6 - 12: Wilderness Art Trip // Creatives Retreat

May 16 - 22: Adirondack 90-Miler (FULL!)

May 16 - 21: Intro to Backpacking

May 24 - 29: Introduction to Canoeing

May 16 - 21: Leadership Paddling

July 7 -12: Intro to Backpacking II



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## ION Corner

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The April meeting of ION (Interfaith Opportunities Network) was held at our UUSA with simultaneous internet access. At our meetings we share news and events about our member groups and are learning about the faith journeys of our own members. Ash Hartwell told us about his becoming a baha'i. He spent his childhood and young teen years in Hawaii where he was exposed to different faiths. At college at Dartmouth, he learned about the baha'i faith and embraced its teaching. Baha'i's believe in the oneness of God and religion and the oneness of humanity; the freedom from prejudice; the centrality of justice in all human endeavors; and inspire to improve themselves and their community. Bahai is practiced in throughout the world in countless locations.

**Events noted by ION at South Congregational Church as part of their 200th Anniversary include:**

May 22, 5:30 Dinner/7:00 presentation **“Centering the Black and Afro-Indigenous History of Amherst”**

Featuring Anika Lopes, founder of Ancestral Bridges

Dinner \$5 per person up to \$15 maximum per family

Presentation by Anika Lopes: Free will offering.

Friday, July 5, Time TBA **Community reading** of Frederick Douglas's influential speech, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”

If you'd like to participate to read a passage, contact Lee at [nathalie@artist.umass.edu](mailto:nathalie@artist.umass.edu).

Respectfully,

Mary Beth Seminario UUSA ION representative