

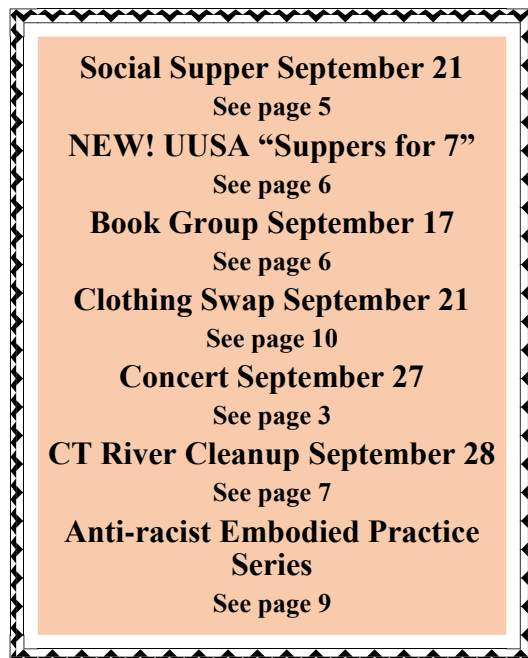
# THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**September 2024**



## 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:**

Rachael Hayes [revrachael@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:revrachael@uusocietyamherst.org)

### **DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS And OPERATIONS:**

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)

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MANAGER:**

Jacy Armenti [REManager@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:REManager@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:**

Linda Callahan and Jeff Clark

### **Clerk:**

Ashley Carter

### **Treasurer:**

Eric Murphy

### **Members At Large:**

Kate Dahlstedt

Sue Kelly

Nancy Hunter

## 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 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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**There is no service on Sunday, September 1. The official “start” to the 2024-2025 worship season is Sunday, September 8 at 10:30 A.M.**

**We encourage you to attend our services in person.** *As of this writing,* masks are optional. 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.

**Sunday, September 8, 10:30 A.M. —*Ingathering and Water Ritual***

**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

Bring a small amount of water from a place in your life to pour into our common bowl.

**Sunday, September 15, 10:30 A.M. —*Love at My Center***

**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

**Sunday, September 22, 10:30 A.M. —*Equinox: Rebalancing***

**The Rev. Rachael Hayes**

**Sunday, September 29, 10:30 A.M. —Title to be Determined**



### Check out the UUSA YouTube Channel!

Original content from our own Sunday services is uploaded to our website, [uusocietvamherst.org](https://uusocietvamherst.org)!  
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 every Sunday's offering plate 50/50 with the recipient organization. Our September offerings will be for **EmbraceRace**.

EmbraceRace was begun by a local couple - a multiracial woman and an African American man - who were concerned about how they would raise their two children to flourish in a challenging world. They realized that how they talked about and otherwise navigated racial issues would be very important for their children's futures and for their family.

EmbraceRace was established in 2016 to 1) provide resources to parents, caregivers, educators and others concerned about children's racial learning; 2) build communities of exchange and mutual support for those caregivers; and 3) work toward the development of a field of learning and practice for caregivers and for researchers, children's media professionals, health professionals, and all those whose efforts make it easier or harder to raise children who are thoughtful, informed and brave about race in the US.

It does this by providing a wide range of resources, including a newsletter, webinars, articles, action guides, a podcast, and a wide range of curricular programs and discussion spaces. Hundreds of thousands of people have utilized their support to raise “colorbrave” children as they learn to live in a multiracial and multi-cultural world.

Please give generously to help EmbraceRace continue its mission of raising children to successfully face their future.

Respectfully,

Mary Beth Seminario, Dedicated Offering Committee member.

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 [here](#). A representative of the chosen organization is asked to speak about it, usually 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, or Brenda Bushouse**.

In September 2023, 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)**.

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**, in March, we raised \$1,200 for **Girls Inc. of the Valley**, and in April, we raised \$1,025 for **Dakin Humane Society**. In May and June we raised \$1950 for the **Movement Voter Fund**.

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## Co-President's Report

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### **Coming Back Together**

Three things have always attracted me to the Unitarian Universalist faith community. One is the theology that ties us back to the days of Emerson, Thoreau, Channing, and some earlier thinkers in Europe. Secondly, our principles that inspire us to social justice and being an open, caring community. Lastly, we take the summer off.

By taking the summer off being a UU, that doesn't mean that we become strict fundamentalists or otherwise lose our spiritual identities. For me, it means that we get more time to enjoy the natural world, because our schedules aren't as busy. Sundays and time meeting in our committees or circles are free for walks, hikes, trips to the beach, or whatever you fancy.

In September, I look forward to coming back together with renewed energy. I also look forward to coming back after the strong foundation that we laid last year.

In our June co-president's letter, we shared a litany of our congregation's accomplishments, including capping the FY23-24 year with a balanced budget that provided salary adjustments to meet the UUA Fair Compensation Guidelines and fully fund our programs and services.

As part of the salary adjustments, there were several changes of note. Our fabulous Congregational Administrator, **Lea Douville**, got a boost to **Director, Programs and Operations**. Secondly, we reallocated duties in the Religious Education Program. Our exceptional DRE, **Andrew Coate**, has taken on full-time work outside the UUSA, which limits his available time during the week. Luckily, our long-time Pre-K Teacher, **Jacy Armenti**, agreed to take on many of Andrew's administrative tasks. As a result, **Jacy** has been promoted to **Religious Education Manager** to recognize her increased responsibility.

Of course, the most notable change from last spring is that **Reverend Rachael** is back in the pulpit and in our community. She, too, returns with renewed energy from a well-deserved sabbatical. She took up boxing over the past four months, but don't worry. She's saving her punches for the workout room.

I told her that we held things together and that everyone stepped up to serve our community well during the sabbatical. Yet, it is great (and a relief in many, many ways) to have her back.

Welcome back old friends and new, young, and old. We are certainly stronger together.

Grateful to be in community with you,

Jeff Clark

Co-president, UUSA

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## Music Notes

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**Friday, September 27, 7 PM: CONCERT! [The Meanies](#)** (with our own **Jeff Clark** on bass). Join us at the Meetinghouse for the first concert of this year's concert series. More details to come.



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## Letter from Our Minister

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Dear UUSA,

It is so good to be back with you! Four months was both a very short and very long time to be apart. I'm sure you'll hear more about these things as the year goes along, but this is what I've been up to since March.

### **Eclipse**

I started my sabbatical by heading to Rochester NY, because I have dear friends there and because Rochester was within the arc of totality for the eclipse. It turned out that the eclipse was total, but so was the cloud cover! I still enjoyed being with people I love in that eerie half-light, and I also participated in a post-eclipse prayer service. If you would like to hear me proclaim E. E. Cummings' "I thank you god for most this amazing" you can find it on their youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/live/suR76-OCw1c?si=VhaE6HOrXQPWoIN4&t=3413>

### **Somatics training**

I took the course Embodied Transformation, offered by Strozzi Institute. If you want to know what that was like, I would recommend the book [The Politics of Trauma](#) by Staci K. Haines. I spent four intense days listening to my body in community with others who were doing the same. This was a period of profound healing, and it feels like it was just the beginning. It's hard to translate the experience outward, because it was so rooted in my own embodied experience. I came away with more intentions to myself than a bag of tricks to share, but I'll do my best to carry this experience forward into my ministry with you.

### **Connecting with my family**

My mother came up to visit me. We enjoyed being in Amherst together and took a short trip over to Salem. If you haven't been to the [Peabody Essex Museum](#), I highly recommend it. We spent a full day there, but to take it all in, I think I'd really want two! In July, I visited my family in Kentucky.

### **Connecting with friends**

A lot of my sabbatical was spent in taking my usual pottery class and connecting with the local friends who support and sustain me. These are the relationships that nurture me as I do my best to be present to the congregation. Sabbatical time gave me the opportunity to spend more extended, relaxed time giving back to the friends who truly serve as my local family. There were walks, dinners, swimming hole outings, and other cozy excursions.

### **Connecting with my body**

After the depth of my somatics training, I found ways to connect with my body, to listen to it and pay attention to what it needed. I have established a workout routine for the first time since 2020. I surprised myself by liking the physical and mental discipline of boxing classes! I also donated platelets from time to time—since donating platelets takes three hours, it's hard to do this with during my regular schedule. And I came to terms with the knowledge that my body really does better without dairy.

### **Things I missed**

While I was away, I missed the congregation. I missed you as individuals and as the community you make together. I also missed four months of your life events and congregational business—please help me out by sharing your news with me and catching me up when I get confused. Thank you all for the many things you did to take care of one another while I was away.

I also skipped the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly this year. I had intended to attend online, but my body was happier not in front of a computer on those days. Apparently I was quoted at the moderator podium this year, and I missed it! Oh well. (The quote was from a ritual I led in our congregation in

2019, which was published in the anthology [Blessing It All](#).) The assembly voted overwhelmingly to accept the revisions to Article II of the UUA bylaws, among other business, naming formally that love is at the center of everything we do and are as a people.

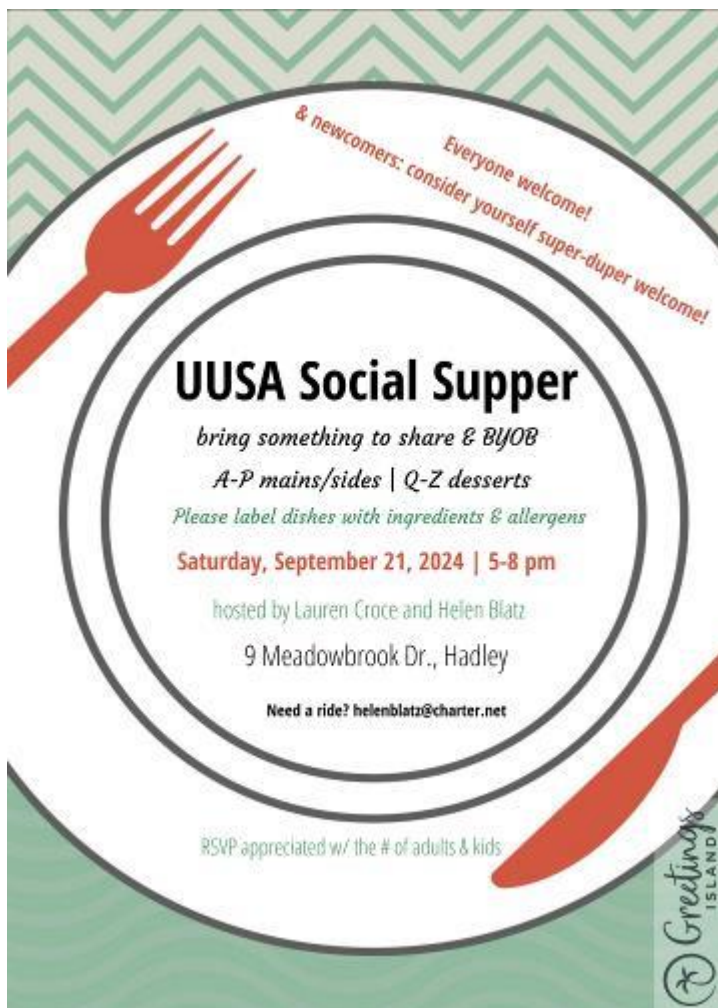
I look forward to a wonderful year in your company. May all of your beginnings unfold with grace, and I'll see you on September 8th for Ingathering! Bring a small amount of water from a place in your life for our water ritual.

In faith,  
Rev. Rachael

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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.

**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 Club September 17** All are welcome to join in a discussion of our September book choice, *Windswept* by Annabel Abbs. The description from the book jacket reads "Annabel Abbs's *Windswept: Walking the Paths of Trailblazing Women*" is a beautifully written meditation on connecting with the outdoors through the simple act of walking. In captivating and elegant prose, Abbs follows in the footsteps of women who boldly reclaimed wild landscapes for themselves, including Georgia O'Keeffe in the empty plains of Texas and New Mexico, Nan Shepherd in the mountains of Scotland, Gwen John following the French River Garonne, Daphne du Maurier along the River Rhone, and Simone de Beauvoir - who walked as much as twenty-five miles a day in a dress and espadrilles - through the mountains and forests of France." Please join us Tuesday at 12:00 pm, September 17, downstairs at UUSA. Bring a lunch if you'd like. Feel free to email with any questions.

Best Wishes,  
Nancy Hunter



## UUSA SUPPERS FOR 7

### Do you like to eat? Do you like to chat with UUs?

*If so, here's the opportunity for you! Join a group of around 7 folks from the UUSA for a monthly potluck in member/friend homes. It's a great way to get to know folks better without an agenda - except to eat together and chat together. Each group will meet a few times (e.g., Oct, Nov, Jan-May) and then we'll start over with new groups next year!*

*What a great way to expand your UUSA social circle!*

### How do I join?

*Complete the simple google form below **by Sept 22**. If you can't complete the form, please call Carolyn Cave at 413-549-0321 to sign up. Carolyn will also be available after the first couple of fall services to help folks sign up during social hour.*

*We'll put together groups based on whether you want to bring kids, days you can meet, etc. If there is sufficient interest, we can include a group or two meeting for lunch for those who'd rather not be out at night.*

### Here's the form!

<https://forms.gle/FJ2hEv6z6dKLYai47>

**Please complete it by Sept 22**

Questions? Contact Carolyn Cave: 413-549-0321



Last year's crew!

## **UUSA Members to Participate in CT River Clean-up**

September 28, 2024 at Groff Park in Amherst

The Connecticut River Clean-up is a watershed-wide, source-to-sea initiative to remove trash from the Connecticut River and its tributaries. Each fall, thousands of volunteer groups in NH, VT, MA, and CT join forces and spend a few hours making the water cleaner, the riverbanks safer, and the wildlife happier.

This year, we'll be joining the Fort River portion, meeting on September 28th at 9:30 A.M. at Groff Park. Coffee and snacks are served at 9:30 and clean-up begins at 10 A.M.

Participants will be dispatched to sites that we have scouted depending on safety and accessibility. Please bring a trash bucket to cut down on the number of garbage bags we use.

All volunteers, even kids, are required to register [here](#).

Please come help keep our beautiful CT valley clean!

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### **Finance Committee**

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The **Finance Committee** will meet on **Monday, September 9, at 7:15 P.M. on Zoom.**

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# Religious Education Ministry

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The mission of our Religious Education program is to foster a nurturing community, to honor the worth of religious thinking, and to celebrate the joy of spiritual exploration. Each person is encouraged to develop personal values based on Unitarian Universalist principles and to incorporate those values in daily living.

**Our Unitarian Universalist religious education program’s vision is to promote and inspire:**

- **Ethical growth – internalizing enduring values like justice, equity, and compassion, and gaining tools to act on them in everyday life.**
- **Social growth – connecting with peers and people of all ages on a deeper level.**
- **Spiritual growth – feeling a connection to the sacred within and beyond ourselves.**

Our programs incorporate social justice activities, worship opportunities, service trips, fellowship, and fun. Our religious educator and minister lead many of our congregations’ lifespan programs, but parents and other members of the congregation often lead them, too. Teaching can be a very fulfilling way to deepen one’s own faith. There are **no registration fees** for Religious Education classes. Please consider [pledging to the UUSA](#). For more information talk to our Minister, **Rev. Rachael Hayes**.

**Please contact our Director of Religious Education ([dre@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:dre@uusocietyamherst.org)) to get connected.**

## **Birth-Preschool**

The preschool class, under **Jacy Armenti’s** loving guidance, explores playing together with kindness and attention to the whole group. Jacy attends each and every Sunday so your toddler will always have a familiar face and warm welcome. Programming includes age-appropriate exploration of the principles of Unitarian Universalism. Jacy Armenti has a PhD in early education and is a long-time preschool teacher.

## **Elementary K-5th**

**All of our lessons are based on the UU’ Principles. They are led by our Director of Religious Education (DRE) and a team of adult volunteers.**

[1st Principle](#): We believe that each and every person is important.

[2nd Principle](#): We believe that all people should be treated fairly and kindly.

[3rd Principle](#): We believe that we should accept one another and keep on learning together.

[4th Principle](#): We believe that each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life.

[5th Principle](#): We believe that all persons should have a vote about the things that concern them.

[6th Principle](#): We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.

[7th Principle](#): We believe in caring for our planet Earth, the home we share with all living things.

[8th Principle](#): We will work to end racism.

## **Middle School**

Programming alternates between Coming of Age and Neighboring Faiths (Crossing Paths). Neighboring Faiths is an excellent introduction to world religions and the faith communities that practice around us in the Amherst area. The Neighboring Faiths program involves visiting one area faith community once a month and talking about the experience in relation to the UU faith. Neighboring Faiths will prepare the youth for the following year when we hope they will participate in the Coming of Age program. That year starts with a bonding experience like a ropes course (or a group hike and games) and ends with a pilgrimage to Boston to learn about UU heritage. One of the most important aspects of this curriculum is time devoted to learning spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, social justice, art — focused time to leave behind any stress and concentrate fully on being at peace.

## **Youth Group (6th-12th)**

What’s dynamic, democratic, deep, playful and comes with tasty snacks? If you are a middle-school or high-school aged youth who seeks a community where fun and kindness are appreciated, then come: discover the UUSA Youth Group. Youth group (YG) **meets weekly on Sundays at 10:30 am during the service**. We invite newcomers who are in 6th-12th grade to join us. You can experience YG first hand, then decide if it is right for you and commit to continue.



## Small Group Ministry registration is now OPEN:

A new worship season is nearly upon us! and we hope you'll consider joining a covenant group, also known as a small group. Covenant groups are gatherings of 6 to 9 people who meet regularly (once or twice a month) to get to know one another and to discuss life's significant questions, spiritual or secular, serious or light. Meeting in small groups not only helps us develop closer ties with individuals but also nurtures our entire community. To hear from current UUSA members about their experience, click [here](#).

We are planning on offering 4 small groups, beginning in October (2 will meet in person and 2 on Zoom). Three groups will meet twice a month and one will meet once per month; meetings are usually 1.5 hrs long.

For more information and to sign up click here: <https://forms.gle/8mjrmMLjdJwXcCUw5>

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### Social Action

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**Anti-racist Embodied Practice Series this Fall** You are invited to join **Sarah Puckett**, **Reverend Rachael**, and **John Gerber** this fall to practice “*dismantling racism in ourselves and our institutions*” (as it says in our Eighth Principle) using Resmaa Menakem’s best-selling book, **My Grandmother's Hands - Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies**, as a guide. You can learn more about this series of weekly practice sessions (October 2—November 20) on our web page. See: <https://www.uusocietyamherst.org/news/please-join-us-for-a-life-changing-experience/>

Please let either **Sarah Puckett** or **John Gerber** know if you have questions. They hope you will join them for this important work.

**UUSA Sends Funds to Foyer Angelique Orphanage in Haiti** In June, UUSA was able to successfully process our first transfer of funds raised for the Foyer Angelique Orphanage in Haiti. As we reported in May, the Board of Trustees approved a partnership with the Trust Funds for All Children to help send funds that they raise for the Orphanage.

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 that TCAF has supported. Pastor Duckens is their caretaker until they graduate from high school. TFAC raises approximately \$100,000 each year from many small donors in Western Mass and Southern Vermont.

The June transfer that we processed was \$15,000. UUSA covers our administrative costs by receiving an additional 5% of the total funds raised.

Pastor Duckens was deeply grateful to receive the funds and is already putting them to good use. There has also been some hopeful news from Haiti recently as 400 Kenyan police officers are reestablishing a measure of security in Port au Prince.



*“My thanks to the donors who have supported the orphaned and abandoned children of Croix des Bouquets for many years. With the increasing power of armed gangs, we were driven from the premises of OFEU (Orphelinat Foyer Evangélique Universel) 10 months ago. While awaiting an intervention by the police that would allow use to reclaim our premises, we have lost everything. Happily, the children are safe for now in another area, but with very limited means.”*

— Pastor Duckens (shown at left with Julie and Angelie)

For UUSA, this is an opportunity to do more than act as agent to transfer money. We may consider the orphanage in an upcoming dedicated offering or other fundraising efforts.

If you have any questions about TFAC or the orphanage, please feel free to contact the board at [board@uusocietyamherst.org](mailto:board@uusocietyamherst.org).

## Save the date! UUSA Clothing Swap 9/21

Do you want to freshen up your wardrobe but don't want to support fast fashion, or can't buy anything right now?

Come to the congregational clothing swap on Saturday 9/21 at 10:30 A.M.! Just in time for fall!

### What is a Clothing Swap?

- A free and fun way to bring your used clothing accessories, and shoes that are in good shape (no rips or holes) to UUSA.
- Everyone will display clothing on tables and chairs (we will try to organize by size).
- Then we swap! Take home something new to you, and your items will find new homes, too.
- "Leftovers" can be donated.

**When: Saturday 9/21 in the social hall at UUSA at 10:30 A.M.**

- Bring gently used clothing, shoes, and accessories.
- This swap will be focused on *adult-sized* clothing for any gender expression.
- If you happen to own some hanging racks, please let **Kat Nowicki** know because those could be very useful!
- What isn't better with snacks? Bring some snacks to share if you'd like!
- Please arrive by 10:30 A.M. to set up the clothing, then we will aim to swap by 11 A.M.
- Here's a **youtube video** describing this type of event if you'd like more info:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IvEn8eIKP2M>



*Image by Jamestheomas5 on Unsplash*

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## Our Caring Ministries



Please let UUSA 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 Hermann, Lynn Sussman, Kate Dahlstedt, Gordon Wyse, Lauren Croce, Karen Mack.**