

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



October 2024



Important Information

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[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!

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Schedule of Services

We encourage you to attend our services in person. You may also attend online. *(Please note that this is a new link for the 2024-2025 worship season).* Click <https://bit.ly/3TNcbll> (Meeting ID: 939 7607 7727 | Passcode: 091159) or call in +1 646 876 9923 and enter Meeting ID).

Sunday, October 6, 10:30 A.M. — *Tikkun Olam*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, October 13, 10:30 A.M. — *The Great Law of Peace*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes

Sunday, October 20, 10:30 A.M. — Title to be Determined

Zir. Alex Kapitan

Sunday, September 29, 10:30 A.M. — *Past, Present, Future*

The Rev. Rachael Hayes



Dedicated Offerings

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 for **EmbraceRace** will be shared in a future newsletter.

Last year, we entered a partnership with the non-profit Trust Funds for All Children (TFAC) to help channel funds that they raised to the **Foyer Angelique Orphanage** in Haiti. The Board of Trustees approved a partnership in May, and we started sending funds that TFAC raised in June.

Now, our congregation can contribute directly to this worthy cause with our **October Dedicated Offering**.

For UUSA, this is an opportunity to do more than act as agent to transfer money; we can help provide the resources for the orphanage to continue its mission.

The orphanage is run by Pastor Duckens Janvier and has 28 children left of the original 45 that entered when TCAF started supporting it 10 years ago. Pastor Duckens is their caretaker, ensuring that the children are housed safely, have basic needs met, and resources for school. He will continue to run the orphanage until the 28 children leave its care.

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.

Please give generously to help Foyer Angelique Orphanage

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Pastor Duckens and the children of Foyer Angelique Orphanage in 2019.

continue its mission of providing these children of Haiti a chance to survive and thrive in a challenging environment. This is an opportunity for us to apply our second principle: providing for justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

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, or Carolyn Holstein**.

UUSA Angel welcomes Historic Stained Glass Walking Tour

On September 29, the Amherst Historical Society & Museum hosted a guided walking tour of historic stained glass windows in downtown Amherst. Participation was limited to 20, with preregistration required.

The tour was led by Suzannah Fabing Muspratt, retired Director of the Smith College Museum of Art. She later wrote, "The tour began in the Rotherwas Room at the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College (the room is English Jacobean built in 1611, with windows from various European countries, dating from the end of the 15th century through the 17th). Then Grace Church (1866), with windows by William Gibson and others. We next stopped by the Romanesque revival Town Hall (1890), which houses the newest stained glass in downtown—a 2004 window called "Pangean Laurel," by Leverett artist Mark Ricker. Since Town Hall isn't open on Sundays, we could just look at this window from the street. Then St. Brigid's, 1925, with windows by the Franz Mayer workshop of Munich, Germany." The last stop was to see The Angel of the Lilies at UUSA, described in a note to **Janis Gray**, who welcomed the group to our meetinghouse, as "your glorious Tiffany window.

"At the end, participants . . . were invited to my house [on North Prospect St.], which has a "cathedral glass" window from 1890, when unpainted glass in pastel colors was manufactured to adorn the new Queen Anne houses being built for the middle class in the neighborhoods around downtown.

"How lucky we are in Amherst to have such a rich representation of the history of stained glass within such a narrow compass!"

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 Club October 15 All are welcome to join in a discussion of our October book choice, *Trust* by Hernan Diaz. How many ways can you tell the same story? Which one is true? These questions and their ethical implications hover over Diaz's second novel. It starts out as a tale of wealth and power in 1920s New York — something Theodore Dreiser or Edith Wharton might have taken up — and leaps forward in time, across the boroughs and down the social ladder, breathing new vitality into the weary tropes of historical fiction. — A.O. Scott, NYT. Please join us Tuesday at 12 P.M., October 15, downstairs at UUSA. Bring a lunch if you'd like. Feel free to email with any questions.

Best Wishes, Nancy Hunter

Co-President's Report

Living Our Principles

The new year brings us many examples of how our congregation truly lives by our principles. Here are just a few examples:

Reclaiming Our Vote. Over the summer and early fall, many of us have been hand-writing postcards to voters across the country to remind them of their registration requirements, early voting rules, and why it's important for them to make their voices heard this year. It's our way of ensuring that our fellow citizens use the conscience and the democratic process to create a just society.

Aiding Foyer Angelique Orphanage. During October, our Dedicated Offering will be going to the Foyer Angelique Orphanage in Haiti. Last spring, the Board approved a proposal to partner with the Trust Funds for All Children to send funds from their donors to the orphanage. Now, we are participating with our contributions to help safely house 28 orphans and ensure they receive an education. It is our contribution to establish a community with peace, liberty and justice for all in Haiti.

Cleaning Up the Connecticut River Valley. It has become an annual rite of environmental passage for us. This year members of the congregation joined with other volunteers at Fort River to help clean up our beautiful river valley. It's one way that we can honor the interdependent web of existence in our part of the world.

Reading *My Grandmother's Hands*. Sarah Puckett and John Gerber will be leading a common read of Resmaa Menakem's best-selling book, *My Grandmother's Hands*. Our common reads of books like *Repentance and Repair*, and *An Indigenous People's History*, have laid the groundwork for our members to seek justice, equity and compassion in our human relations, as well as live by our 8th principle of building a diverse multicultural Beloved Community.

Joining Small Group Ministries. Starting this month, covenant gatherings of 6 to 9 people will meet regularly 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 acceptance and spiritual growth within our congregation.

Defining Our Mission. The Committee on Shared Ministries is continuing to offer Mission Chats to get your input on the mission of our congregation. The three themes that have emerged through our surveys and mission chats so far include supportive community, spiritual growth, and doing good work in the world. Look out for the next Mission Chats on October 6 (Zoom) and November 17 (Social Hall), followed by Cottage Meetings to refine the themes from your input. It one way that we ensure UUSA is conducting a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

Transgender Inclusion. Be on the lookout for the [Transgender Inclusion in Congregations](#) series put together by the Transforming Hearts Collective. This series was introduced to us by one of its creators, Alex Kapitan, at a service in which he spoke last June. It will help deepen our understanding of trans identity and how to create congregation that is fully inclusive and affirming of the full breadth of gender diversity. It is another step that we take to acknowledge the inherent worth and dignity of every person in community.

These are just a few highlights of the autumn 2024. We continually live our values through the valuable contributions of our Caring Team, Worship Collaborative, Welcoming and Membership Committee, social gatherings and all that helps us maintain a healthy, thriving community.

Grateful to be in community with you,
Jeff Clark
Co-president, UUSA Board of Trustees

Green Sanctuary

Our Green Sanctuary Committee organized a tour of the Massachusetts Recycling Facility (MRF) in Springfield on August 26. Fourteen of us chose a bright, sunny summer day to learn all about where our recyclables go and how they get processed.

The tour was led by Steve Ellis from the MA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). It was both an

educational and sensory experience. Our youngest member, **Clara Herman**, said, “The MRF is big, stinky, and loud; but it was cool to see the front loader pushing bottles onto the conveyor belt.”

Springfield MRF serves 70 municipalities in Western Massachusetts that practice “dual stream” recycling. Dual stream recycling collects paper and cardboard separately from plastics, glass and metals. The Town of Amherst contracts USA Waste & Recycling to collect recyclables in a “single stream,” which goes to a different facility in Connecticut that separates the different types of materials. However, if you dump your recycling at the transfer station, it goes to dual stream facilities.



UUSA members at MRF

Here are a few other takeaways:

- The benefit of recycling to municipalities is largely financial. It cost over \$100 per ton “tipping charge” for dual stream materials. The municipality can get \$80 per ton back for recyclable materials, so the net cost is only \$20 - \$70/ton.
- The single stream method is cheaper and easier to collect, but harder to sort and sell. Dual stream is harder to collect, but easier to turn into a sellable product and only 5% of what is collected turns out to be trash. Most towns are opting for single stream due to cheaper collection costs, but 20% turns out to be trash. Hopefully more robotics and automation for sorting will improve the trash rate.
- What can be recycled is very complicated. Most plastics CANNOT be recycled. In general, clear and white plastics that are #1, #2 or #5, such as tubs, jugs, or soda bottles, CAN be recycled. Black and colored plastics, and those with other numbers CANNOT. Most paper and cardboard CAN be recycled, including pizza boxes with cheese on them. Steve Ellis said, “When in doubt throw it out.”
- If you have the choice between products that are in an aluminum can vs. glass or plastic bottle, choose aluminum. Aluminum sells for \$1000 a ton and is easy to recycle. It takes only 60 days to turn it into a new can. Glass and plastic bottles are about the same environmentally, though glass is a little easier to turn into composites and road materials.
- Only about 5% of plastics distributed within the US get recycled. So, the best solution to that problem is to produce and use less plastic. Here is a good [article on the problem of recycling plastic](#).
- Paper recycling has shifted from being primarily newspaper and office paper to cardboard. The pile of material in the paper facility is mostly Amazon and other shipping boxes. That’s not good or bad, just different

Overall, we learned a lot, came to appreciate the complexity of recycling, but were disappointed that we don’t recycle most of our post-consumer stuff. Steve Ellis admitted that one of the challenges is that public, in general, is lazy when it comes to throwing out our trash.

By Jeff Clark with contributions from Ashley Carter, Jack Herman, and Clara Herman.

The tour started with a talk and videos about recycling, where we could ask questions. After the talk, we walked the catwalk in the bottle facility to see a front loader push plastic into the pit. From the pit, the material goes on a conveyor belt where the employees sort the material in glass, metals, the different classes of plastic, and trash. Those materials get compressed into big blocks, which we could see outside in the courtyard.

This is where **Jack Herman reiterated**, “You need nose plugs for this tour!”

One of our takeaways is that the recycling supply chain is very complicated. There are 9 MRFs across the state, most of which are single stream facilities. And they don’t handle hazard waste, waste oil, mattresses, electronics, and compost that go to other facilities.

Transgender Inclusion in Congregations program begins Nov. 16:

Join **Robin Livingston**, **Yael Fuerst**, and **Kat Nowicki** for the Transgender Inclusion in Congregations program by the Transforming Hearts Collective (including Zr. Alex Kapitan who did a [service](#) with us in June). This course is designed for congregations and faith communities looking to deepen the practice of welcome. Going beyond “Transgender 101” terminology and concepts, it dives deep into topics such as practices for building Beloved Community, exploring gender diversity and trans spirituality, and how to transform culture and expand the circle of inclusion within a congregation.

This program consists of 6 online video lecture sessions each with supplementary material. Participants will view the lectures and supplementary material independently, and we will meet 3 times in person as a group to discuss the lectures in pairs on Nov. 16 10A.M-12 P.M., Jan. 29 6-8 P.M. and Mar. 19 6-8 PM. Learn more on [the website](#) or in the [“All About the Course”](#) video. Participation in all 3 discussion sections is highly encouraged. A donation is encouraged, but not required, for participants. Donations will go to the UUSA’s Richard Stevens Leadership Fund to offset the cost of the program for our congregation. You do not need to purchase the course as an individual as we have a coupon code for our congregation.

Reach out to **Robin Livingston** for more information, to RSVP, and get our congregation’s coupon code for the platform. Contact info is in the directory, or ask Lea.

Report from the Sociocracy Support Circle

Thanks to the 12 members and committed friends of our congregation who attended the training offered by Sociocracy for All last month. One of our members reported after the workshop that *“it was good practice, and it was wonderful to see others interested.”*

Indeed, those of us who are members of the Sociocracy Support Circle were gratified to see such a large representation from our congregation. Another member responded to our request for feedback with the following: *“the workshop gave a very good grounding on the methodology. There are lots of concepts that we can put into practice at the UUSA.”* One specific suggestion was, *“we should be making decisions by consent as much as possible.”*

Those of us who are trained in facilitating, decision making, and organizing meetings using sociocracy know how powerful it can be. It is also more inclusive than the common practices many of us learned while working with businesses, non-profits, or as part of an educational institution. And perhaps most attractive, it makes life easier for the group leaders or chairperson. One UU who attended wrote *“...one of my favorite things about sociocracy is that it eases the job of being chair of a committee by dividing that job into two components, a leader who keeps the big picture in mind and a facilitator who works on the agenda and runs the meeting.”*

The UUSA Board of Trustees began an experiment using some of sociocracy’s tools and practices beginning in September 2022. The board and several of the committees, ministries or circles have continued the experiment and were part of a Sociocracy for All training last spring. We can all learn more, of course, and improve with further training and practice. We encourage you to take one of the free introductory webinars offered by Amherst-based [Sociocracy for All that are available this fall](#), and also check out all their [introductory resources](#).

Submitted by the members of the [UUSA Sociocracy Support Circle](#)

Our Caring Team

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**.

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Best Wishes, Nancy Hunter

Finance Committee

The **Finance Committee** will meet on **Monday, October 14, at 7:15 PM on Zoom.**

ION Corner

After a summer break, the Interfaith Opportunities Network (ION) had its September meeting at First Church with almost all the representatives present. We enjoyed reconnecting with one another. We were reminded that it is very important for us to support our Jewish and Muslim neighbors as the conflict in the Middle East becomes more inflamed every day and tensions and bigotry manifest themselves in this country. The Hampshire Mosque (Rt 9) and Jewish Community Center (Main St.) welcome visitors. Mosque services are Friday at 1 P.M. Women should dress modestly, with leg and head coverings. JCA services starting at 5 P.M. on the 3rd Friday of the month are very lively with music.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Beth Seminario, UUSA ION representative

