Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

NEWSLETTER

July & August 2026

July 5, 10:30 am - The Power of Now
Sacred Texts Group - This service will be held in the **Social Room**.

Our Church's Sacred Texts and Coffee group has been meeting for a few years. Come join us in this coffee and conversation service as we sample a session and collectively extract wisdom from the writings of inspired people. We will be delving into a passage from Eckhart Tolle's book *The Power of Now*.

July 12, 10:30 am - Censorship and the 1st Amendment
Mary Michalek - This service will be held in the **Social Room**.

Last summer Mary Michalek presented a service on book challenges, the first amendment, and school libraries. This Coffee and Conversation service will offer congregants an opportunity to discuss these themes and how they relate to our UU values.

July 19, 10:30 am - Reciprocity for the Gifts of Nature
Sue Powers - This service will be held at the **Ives Park Pavilion in Potsdam**.

This service will explore our personal relationships with nature and consider our attitudes about the Gifts of nature. We each need to reach deep into our spiritual beings and ask – do I own the intrinsic value of nature and Mother Earth in my heart?

July 26, 10:30 am - Change is Coming; What do we need to imagine?
Members of Church Council - This service will be held in the **Social Room**.

This coffee and conversation service is about moving forward.

August 2, 10:30 am - A Divine preference for the Poor
Hattie Taylor - This service will be held in the **Sanctuary**.

A look at the concept of God's "preferential option for the poor" as suggested by liberation theologian and Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez. How does Gutiérrez reconcile 'fairness' and 'preferential treatment' while God remains just?

Hattie Taylor is a North Country local raised in North Bangor. After feeling a call to ministry in college, she earned her Masters of Divinity degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 2020. Moving back up to the North Country, Hattie pastored three United Methodist churches before feeling a call to Roman Catholicism. In June of 2023, she was confirmed at St. Mary's Potsdam and became the Catholic campus minister for the four local colleges where she leads bible studies and events. With the additional duty as pastoral associate for Potsdam and Colton churches, she is managing the hospital ministry and helps organize funerals.

August 9, 10:30 am - Building Relationship Through Play
Carol Zimmermann - This service will be held in the **Sanctuary**.

Love is at the center of our shared values and thus we value relationships at the center of our faith. Play is a great way to explore the foundations of building relationships with each other. Come let's play together in an all ages community.

August 16, 10:30 am - Oh Mother!
Mary Michalek and Members of the Congregation - This service will be held in the **Sanctuary**.

Mothers give us life and often shape who we become. When someone becomes a mother, they often experience a transformation of identity that expands who they are. The term mother can bring about thoughts of unconditional love, unrealistic expectations, gentle caregiving, selfless actions, and/or harsh discipline. In this service we will hear various voices share a perspective of how mothering has shaped their own lives.

August 23, 10:30 am - How Simple Is It?
Rev. Joseph Clevelend - This service will be held in the **Sanctuary**.

Join UU minister and musician Rev. Joe for an exploration of the complexities of what Unitarian Universalists believe with the help of the song "(Ours Is a) Simple Faith" by David Tamulevich.

Rev. Joseph Cleveland (he/him) is a banjo player, peanut butter and jelly sandwich maker, and Doctor Who fanatic from Minnesota who's made Central New York his home. After a brief ministry in central Michigan, he served the UU Congregation of Saratoga Springs, NY, for more than ten years. Trained in both science and literature as well as religion, Rev. Joe is fascinated by how we can find wonder and create meaning in our lives through music, ritual, and story. Rev. Joe is the spouse of Kristin, a UU Membership Professional, and they live in Liverpool, NY.

August, 30 - TBD
This service will be held in the **Sanctuary**.

Faith Development

OOOO!!! Summer!!! Tis the season for playing, relaxing and enjoying the warm, beautiful days. There will be a few changes in our congregation this summer including in religious education. In July, we will gather for fun days on Sunday, July 5 and 12. After a short hiatus, we will resume on Sunday, August 9 when I will be leading the experiential worship service. For the remainder of August, we will enjoy some more fun days!

A reminder! During the last week of August we will be hosting the Awe and Wonder Summer Program for 5-12 year olds. You can register for one day or five days and even half days. Click here or check the church calendar for more information and to register.

I will be taking the full month of July off for vacation and rejuvenation. I will be playing, relaxing, and enjoying the warm days. I hope you find time for this too. Blessed be.

In faith,
Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

President's Message – July / August 2026

Next Steps

In June, we said goodbye to Rev. James and wished him well on the next step in his family's journey.

Now, we begin the next step in our journey. The exact nature of that next step remains unclear as we head into July. However, when we leave July and head into August, we expect to know the next step and for it to be one of the following:

- **Interim Ministry:** Although unlikely, churches do still match with an interim minister in July. Our partners at the UUA continue to look for possibilities for us, and our position remains on the website for ministers who are still seeking a position beginning in August.

- **Lay-Lead Year:** At this moment, this next step seems most likely. As the name suggests, a lay-lead year would involve leading ourselves for a year without a full-time minister.

  The name is a bit of a misnomer, because our staff—our multi-talented Director of Religious Education, Carol Zimmerman, and our excellent new Congregational Administrator, Paula Sturge—will continue to support the work of the church. Betsy Kepes, Paul Siskind, and Carol Strome will also continue to provide us with music each Sunday. And finally, we expect many ministers to join us as pulpit guests over the year.

  However, more responsibility for the day-to-day functioning of the church will be assumed by our committees and teams, and a broader cross-section of the congregation will be asked to contribute to our worship services to avoid overburdening the Worship Team.

  We expect to charge a task force with creating a structure for a lay-lead year and will share that structure in August should a lay-lead year be our next step.

- **Creative Partnership/Partially Lay-Lead Year:** The final possible next step combines the other two: i.e., we hire a part-time minister to assume some responsibilities (called a Contract Ministry). The UUA uses the term creative partnership because, ideally, the arrangement would reflect a creative approach to fulfilling our most pressing needs based on the contract minister's abilities and availability. This minister can also assist us with interim work.

If we find ourselves taking the second or third step, we will search next year for a full-time interim minister to join us in August 2027. We will do some interim work ourselves this year, resulting in greater clarity regarding our goals for an interim ministry (clarity that was not possible to achieve in the three weeks we had in April to create our church profile). This increased clarity increases our chances of matching with an available minister. In addition, circumstances aligned this year to result in a severe shortage of interim ministers; hopefully, we will not experience such an alignment next year.

While transitions pose challenges, they also provide opportunity. We are strong, and I am confident we will emerge from this period of transition even stronger.

If you have questions or concerns, I encourage you to reach out to me either during Social Hour or by email (president@uucantonny.org).

Take care,

--Cathy Crosby

Church Council President

For The Reverend James Galasinski to Honor His Service
To the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton NY

June 28, 2026

For 50 years, our legacy
was ministers numbering three.
Their high bar James'd reach
and each Sunday preach
wise sermons and clever stories.

Three years into leading his flock,
Rev. James, he was in for a shock.
COVID's challenge to meet:
not skipping a beat
an online worship he did rock!

James lives by our UU values,
supporting diversity views.
He fights the good fight,
defending what's right.
Something a true leader should do.

For 10 years, James has been the face
of showing why we love this place:
pulpit, village green,
or Albany's scene
or standing behind his huge bass.

Dear James, we have hit a great stride;
you've deepened our spiritual side,
and blessings accrued.
So, deep gratitude
to you, faithful pastor and guide.

By Cathy Crosby

UU BIRTHDAYS

If you're inclined to send a birthday card, addresses can be found in the church directory online. If you'd like to support the Caring Circle, or to add any birthday names that are missing, email caringcircle@uucantonny.org.

July 2 : Perry Frank
July 3 : Steve Coffin
July 4 : Franny Frank
July 4 : Bryan Thompson
July 4 : Mike Corse
July 9 : Carol Zimmerman
July 9 : Tim Opdyke
July 10 : David Weissbard
July 11 : Phil Collins
July 13 : Henry Hebb
July 15 : Kathy Wyckoff
July 15 : Einar Kocho-Williams
July 17 : Violet Woodruff
July 17 : Carol Gable
July 18 : Max Kocho-Williams
July 19 : Finley Thomas
July 20 : Lillian Graham
July 21 : Kathleen O'Rourke
July 24 : Rachel Graham
July 27 : Emma Bentley-Hicks
July 29 : David Doran

August 5 : Arliene Oey, Isabel Cleary Schelly, Thomas Cleary Schelly
August 6 : Shaunie Cadrieux
August 7 : Nadia Marano, Walter Michalek, Sara Hutcheson
August 8 : Elizabeth Simon
August 9 : Sharon Tavernier, Judy Gibson
August 10 : Peggy Lynn
August 13 : Josiah Nelson
August 14 : Bill Hull
August 16 : Raymond Crouse
August 18 : Ella Rubio
August 19 : Jamey Merkel
August 21 : Dan Duggan
August 23 : Sam Joseph
August 24 : Caleb Bentley-Hicks
August 30 : Ethel Slocum
August 31 : Barbie Miller, Teresa Veramendi

Exciting Events Coming Up In July and August

Lovely Layering and Looping!

Join our Frame Drum Group in **July and August** for **two evenings** of exploring beautiful combinations of healing sounds and rhythms.

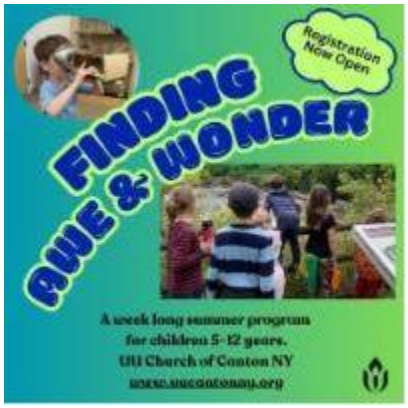
- On **Tuesday, July 28** th at 6:30 pm we will play a variety of Persian drums, cymbals, gong, bells, and handpan by layering them together to create mesmerizing patterns. Caron Collins will provide an array of professional percussion instruments from her collection for you to explore.

- On **Tuesday, August 25** th at 6:30 pm, Alisa Wood-Darie will join us with cello and singing bowls to lead us in the art of looping meditative sounds together with our frame drums and finger cymbals. Alisa Woods, Ph.D., LMHC, is a behavioral neuroscientist and licensed mental health counselor based in Potsdam. A lifelong cellist, she integrates classical cello, nervous system science, and sound therapy into restorative musical experiences.

Come join us for **both evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 pm** in the Social Room. No experience necessary and drums provided. All ages and abilities are welcome.

For more information, contact Caron at bandtchr1@hotmail.com

Finding Awe and Wonder Summer Program - week of August 24 through August 28



Children 5-12 years are invited to explore the mysteries and splendor of our world. Through daily outings, guest presenters, art and cooking projects, storytelling and me, we find fascination and admiration for the place we live and the life we live.
Our day starts with a centering circle, then a morning activity, after lunch we have quiet time and another activity. We end the day with a little free time and a closing circle. Each theme centered day will find us learning, relaxing and playing!

Register your children today.

News from the Social Action Team - *Get Involved!*

Venezuela Aid Needed - collections continue through July 17

The Social Action Team is coordinating with North Country Immigrant Allies (NCIA) by collecting and delivering aid to the victims of the earthquakes in Venezuela. There are sizable communities of Venezuelans in Plattsburgh and the Lake Placid/Saranac areas - our North Country neighbors and friends.

The best way for the Social Action Team and the Church to support Venezuela this summer would be for us to be a collection site. People can drop off donations of hardgoods and/or cash during Paula's office hours (M-H 9:00 to 3:00) and on Sundays.

Recommended hardgoods are bottled water (large wrapped packages), tents, diapers, tools, etc.. Cash donations would go to NCIA to offset the costs of shipping the hardgoods to the NYC sites, or renting a trailer to drive it down.

***Social Action Potluck - July 29* 5:30 pm**

Enjoy some goodies and plan your next social action event!

***Free Legal Help - Renter/Landlord Issue* - August 26**

Adam Martin from the Volunteer Lawyers Project of Central NY is hosting a series of clinics about renter/landlord issues, including leases, maintenance, evictions, etc. Come with questions, and bring relevant paperwork. Share this info with anyone who might be interested.

Wednesday 8/26, 4:00-6:00 pm, UU Church of Canton - Library

www.vlpcny.org
housing@vlpcny.org
(315) 807-0043

***Help us plan our next Social Justice Initiative!* - Fall dates TBA**
Our next SJI will focus on the topic of ***Overcoming Isolation,*** and will begin in Fall of 2026 and continue into Spring of 2027. We invite members of the congregation to be part of the planning team for this important event. Over the next few months, we will be selecting movies to screen during the SJI, as well as selecting speakers and organizing other events. If you're interested in being part of the planning team, please speak with or e-mail our SJI Coordinator, Alyse Millikan: sjcoordinator@uucantonny.org. The SJI planning team meets independently from the Social Action Team, to give flexibility for people with different schedules to participate.

What Can UUBay Do for U?

Do you have something that you no longer need, but it's too 'good' to throw away (and who wants to throw stuff away, anyway)? By utilizing UUBay, Jan and Peter offered up a gift certificate that they could not use. Pat and Louis had that very need that the gift certificate was for. The plan came together! UUBay saves the day!

From Pat:
Hi, Paula. Thanks for conveying the hotel voucher from Peter to Louis. Such a timely use of UUBay. If I could think of a way, I'd suggest nudging our congregation to "Consider UUBay" when you have an unusual potential white elephant. Jan DeWaters and Peter Brouwer got to take something that would have otherwise gone into their wastebasket - useless (expiration date was June 1). We got half price for our last two nights in town at the U. Inn. And the church will get $150 (which I'll leave as a check on your desk this morning). Talk about a win-win-win! Thanks to all!

Future Events and Notices

Caring for our community with compassion.

The Canton UU Church offers a Pastoral Care Team who is charged with providing nonjudgemental compassionate support and listening, along with practical assistance during life transitions, grief, or hardships. The current members of the team are Leo Burger, Sara Hutcheson, Helen Hutchinson, David Nelson, and Peter Wyckoff. The team can be contacted either by contacting the church office or contacting an individual member. In July, Sara Hutcheson will be the team lead from July 5 - 18 and Peter Wyckoff will be the lead from July 19 - August 1.

This Fall: Host a Gourmet Dining for a Great Cause Dinner!

One of the most enjoyable traditions at our church is returning this fall — *Gourmet Dining for a Great Cause!* We are looking for hosts to open their homes, share a meal, and help raise funds for the church in a fun and welcoming way.

Hosting is simple: choose a theme, plan a dinner or brunch, and invite fellow congregants to sign up by making a donation to the church. Past events have included everything from gourmet pizza dinners, international cuisine nights, and seasonal celebrations.

You do not need to be a professional chef to host. The heart of Gourmet Dining is hospitality, creativity, and community. Co-hosting with friends is also encouraged. Not enough space in your dining room? Reserve the church's Social Room for your dinner!

To volunteer as a host or ask questions, please contact Todd Moe, at toddamoe@gmail.com, or a member of the Stewardship team. We'll have more information and a schedule of dinners in our autumn newsletters. We hope to make this year's Gourmet Dining season our best yet!

The 2027 Canvass Small Groups Campaign

This fall's Canvass Campaign will offer an opportunity to connect with one another in meaningful conversation and community. The Canvass is our annual invitation to every member and friend of the church to make a financial pledge for the coming year. Instead of traditional one-on-one visits, we will be gathering in small groups both at church and in members' homes starting in October.

These gatherings will give us a chance to reflect together on the future of our church, share hopes and ideas, and support the mission and ministries of our congregation. Stewardship facilitators will guide each meeting, so hosts can simply focus on providing a welcoming space for conversation and fellowship.

We are currently looking for volunteers willing to serve as hosts. Hosting is easy — all you need to do is open your home to a small group of church members for an evening or afternoon gathering. Meetings will be modest in size, and light refreshments are more than enough

If you are interested in hosting a gathering or would like more information, please contact the Stewardship Committee or the church office.

Trash to Treasure to a Church Donation

Spring/summer cleaning? Too few items for a yard sale? Don't forget about UUBay — a creative way to turn unwanted items and services into support for our church! That clutter in your attic, extra garden produce, unused theater tickets, or even your skills and hobbies can become a donation to the church. Help transform "trash into treasure" for our congregation. Every contribution helps support our church while building community in fun and unexpected ways. Contact the church office to find out more about UUBay and sign up to receive email updates.

Staff Schedules for the Church Year:

Carol Zimmerman, DRE:
Available by email **Sunday–Wednesday** and by appointment on **Tuesday & Wednesday.**

Paula Sturge, Congregational Administrator:
Available by email, office hours **Monday - Thursday 9 am - 3 pm**

You can always check the calendar on our website for details.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

Creating a welcoming, compassionate faith community,
committed to social justice and open to wonder.

Together we strive to:

- Foster a spirit of inclusion and connection
- Encourage exploration of truth and meaning
- Nurture respect for all life and the environment
- Live our values in the North Country and in the wider world

For online giving, please click HERE or scan the QR code below:

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton
3 1/2 East Main Street
Canton, New York 13617

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education
Paula Sturge, Congregational Administrator
Betsy Kepes, Music Coordinator

(315) 386-2498
office@uucantonny.org
www.uucantonny.org