Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

NEWSLETTER

September 2026

September 6, 10:30 am - In Gathering
Worship Committee and Carol Zimmermann
***In Gathering - Please bring a small amount of water from somewhere sacred to you as we celebrate our multi-generational water ceremony and the start of our church year.

September 13, 10:30 am - A Solo Pilgrimage in Scotland
Betsy Kepes
***St. Cuthbert died in 793 AD but his legend lives on in the Scottish/English borderlands. Betsy Kepes walked east on the100 kilometer St. Cuthbert's Way, from the ruins of the Melrose Abbey to the low-tide crossing to the sacred island of Lindisfarne. What can be learned from a walk in a place where ancient history is still so visible?

September 20, 10:30 am - The Luck Spectrum
Doug Rubio
***Some people seem to have all the luck, while others seem to have endless streams of bad luck. What does it mean to be lucky or unlucky in life? What effect does behavior have on our luck? And how should the answers to those questions guide us as we practice our Unitarian Universalist faith?

Doug Rubio is a member of the Worship Committee. He has been attending our church for over 32 years, and has held a number of leadership positions. In his non-church life he is a retired professor of classical guitar at SUNY Potsdam.

September 27, 10:30 am - The Wisdom of Broken Things
Rev. Kimberley Debus
***Where do we find wisdom when times are hard, nerves are frayed, and conflict breaks our relationships? We will turn to the sages as we ponder the lessons broken things can teach us about vulnerability, nurturing, and forgiveness.

It was such a joy to meet so many of you in August, and to be among you as we begin this transitional, interim time. And it is an honor to work with an incredible staff and lay leadership team, shepherding you on the path of your search for a new minister.

We approach the year with curiosity – who are we now and who do we want to be? What does it mean to belong here? How are we to be with one another? How do we honor our traditions, yet trust the dawning future more? What is our sweet spot, the place where our vision meets the needs of our congregation, our community, and the World?

Our time together will be filled with lots of questions and at least some answers; it will be filled with glorious successes and maybe a few awkward failures; it will be filled with newness and excitement and also the consistency of the every day; it will be filled with some sorrows and maybe some troubles, but also with joy and laughter. But every day, there will be love, and covenant, and faith, and hope.

So what does this all look like, practically?

While I am not with you in person consistently, I am with you – and available to you. You can make an appointment by going to my Calendly (calendly.com/kdebus/connect-with-rev-kimberley) – that's great for pastoral care and other conversations. I will also be on a number of our committee zoom meetings, including worship, pastoral care, the council (of course), and others as needed.

When I'm in town, I'll be arriving on a Thursday (hopefully midday) and will be both available for some in-person appointments and leading a variety of programs; some will be fellowship and fun, and some will be more focused on our interim work. And of course, leading worship in your beautiful sanctuary.

This will be an unusual time for all of us – but we will do great things through the strength of shared ministry, with support from the amazing staff (shout out to Paula and Carol) and commitment of the council and other lay leaders.

Let us say yes to what's ahead of us, yes to possibility, yes to growth, yes to what's new, yes to this incredible congregation as you prepare to meet the next moment.

Yes!

Faith Development

As we kick off the new church year, begin an interim ministry and the start of my 13th year as your Director of Religious Education, I wanted to share some of what I have been learning as part of my professional development over the past few months. The Unitarian Universalist Association (www.uua.org) and their Lifespan Faith Engagement office (www.uua.org/lifespan) have been sharing many opportunities to learn about Whole Church Religious Education (www.uua.org/lifespan/re) and a new curriculum called Woven Faith (www.uua.org/lifespan/curricula/woven-faith). You heard me share some of these ideas from the pulpit over the past year too.

As the UUA states, "Whole Church RE is an approach that combines three things:
the need for shared experiences that connect people and build covenantal community, an essential part of our non-creedal faith; lifespan faith development's role in shaping and strengthening UU identity and commitment within and among individuals and their communities; and engaging and powerful practices in religious education (RE) but underutilized in adult or all-ages spaces." Woven Faith is a "theme-based, whole church series which supports congregational shared ministry by equipping lay leaders and religious professionals alike to weave together a shared message. An organizing principle of Woven Faith is that *the congregation is the curriculum;* that is, that the whole environment—accessibility, worship, fellowship, RE classes, leadership development, caring ministries, justice work—all inform the Unitarian Universalism we learn and absorb. Woven Faith provides avenues to incorporate our UU values more intentionally into the fabric of our congregational lives."

I believe by focusing on whole church programming our community will grow in our shared values and gain a healthy relational foundation from which we can do the interim work necessary to grow and thrive as a community. I am excited to explore these ideas with the whole congregation and especially the RE teaching teams when we gather for the Teaching Ministry Training on September 13 at noon. If you are interested in serving in RE, please reach out to me at dre@uucantonny.org

As we move into this new year with our interim minister, look for ways we will be incorporating Whole Church RE and the Woven Faith curriculum into our faith development programming for all ages.

~ Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

President's Message

September 2026

Welcome, Rev. Kimberley Debus!

On August 22 and 23, we welcomed our new interim minister, the Rev. Kimberley Debus, to the UU Church of Canton! Although Rev. Kimberley will complete some of her ministry virtually, she will also be with us in person several weekends during the year. In the fall, Rev. Kimberley will visit Canton on September 27, November 15, December 13, and December 24 for Christmas Eve. In addition, she will join us via Zoom on October 11th.

In addition to leading worship, Rev., Kimberley will lead our interim work as we consider the next chapter for our faith community following the departure of Rev. James.

Rev. Kimberley is based in the Washington DC Metro area, inspiring an artful and art-filled faith. She consults with congregations and religious professionals throughout the denomination. In addition to her consulting ministry, she also serves the Cedarhurst UUs in the greater Baltimore area, and writes about congregational life, worship, and other shenanigans on her weekly newsletter, Hold My Chalice.

Raised by Unitarian parents, Rev. Kimberley returned to Unitarian Universalism in the 1990s during her years as an activist in North Carolina's LGBTQ community. She has been known to burst out in song and will wax poetic about British panel shows, mysteries, trivia, and The West Wing. A native New Yorker, she makes her home in Takoma Park, MD, with her three tabby cats.

Look for announcements in the weekly News for UU about special events with Rev. Kimberley when she is here at the end of the month!

Take care,

--Cathy Crosby

Church Council President

~ putting our house in order ~

Online Host
This summer, the worship committee has transitioned away from a personalized online host. We continue to share services through the existing Zoom link, but we will not have a separate member of the worship committee interacting during the services.

Wanted: Technicians
Do you know someone who is tech-savvy and interested in earning a little cash on Sunday morning? The Worship Committee is looking for technicians to operate the Zoom feed for worship services.

Orders of Service Input
The Worship Committee is looking for input on how congregants prefer to have information shared during the worship service. Traditionally, we have done this through a paper order of service with a sheet for announcements. Earlier this year, we used slides and written hymn numbers on a dry-erase board. For the next couple months we are going to research how we can best engage with the congregation to share important information.

Part of this effort includes a survey that congregants can fill out to let us know personal preferences. Paper copies of the survey can be found in the Social Room starting September 6th and can be returned in the box labeled "Order of Service Surveys" or to a member of the Worship Committee by September 27th. Online surveys can be filled out from now through September 27th.

https://forms.gle/eUfWL1PRYybczSbs5

Contact Mary Michalek at worship@uucantonny.org with inquiries or for more information or with any questions or concerns.

Be a Pulpit Guest!
Do you have an idea for a sermon budding inside of you? Have you experienced something magical, transformative, or inspiring that you would love to share with the congregation? Are you interested in sharing your connection to our church and/or religion but haven't thought it was the right time? Consider this your invitation to be a guest in our pulpit!

If you have the seeds, the first buds, or a fully bloomed sermon, please contact Mary Michalek at worship@uucantonny.org. The Worship Committee would love to hear from you!

Photographers Needed
Are you good with photography and people? The Communication Committee needs help with taking pictures of our church events and activities. You would also need to be comfortable asking if we can use this photo for church publications.

If this is you and you want to learn more, please contact the Communication Committee via email at commcomm@uucantonny.org.

UU BIRTHDAYS

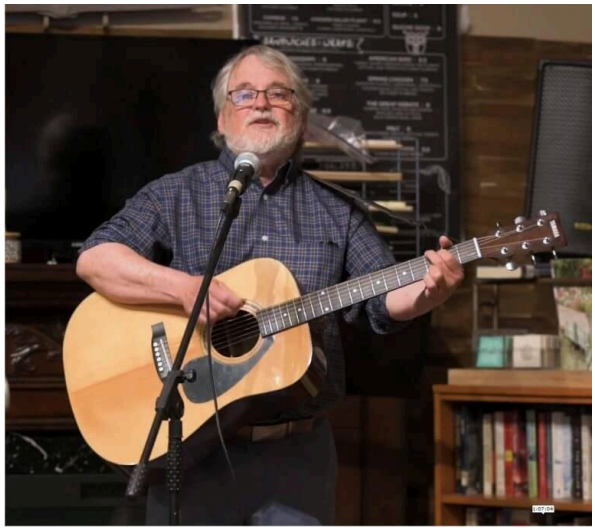
If you're inclined to send a birthday card, addresses can be found in the church directory online. If you'd like to support the Caring Circle, or to add any birthday names that are missing, email

caringcircle@uucantonny.org.

September 1 : Tom Van de Water
September 2 : Coral Pondysh
September 3 : Jacky Ryan
September 6 : Carol LaMarche
September 7 : Kayla Bisnett, Ursula Jessmer
September 8 : Tom Pynchon
September 10 : Jim Williams
September 14 : Keenan LeBoeuf-Davis, Sheila Cerwonka
September 17 : Emma Hull, Zach Gagliardi
September 18 : Colette LaMarche
September 22 : Ruth Baltus, Ali Kocho-Williams
September 24 : Sarah Rivers
September 25 : Lorraine Olendzenski, Ken Hebb
September 26 : Robin Collen

Exciting Events Coming Up In September

Randy Cahall Concert
Monday, September 14, 2026 6:30 - 8:30 pm



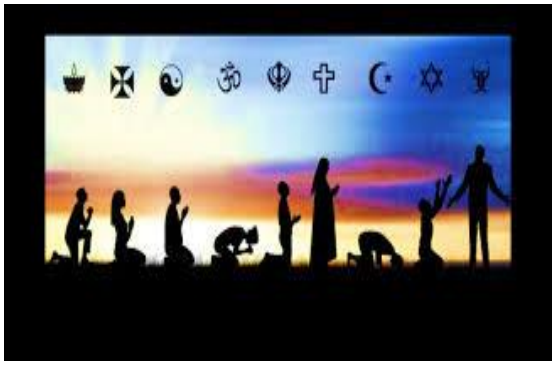
For five decades, Cahall has used folk music as a vehicle for social justice, peace, compassion and progressive change. A modern-day troubadour, he has supported compassionate causes not only with his music, but with his time and his presence—taking part in marches, rallies, meetings and community gatherings across the country.

Cahall's extensive repertoire draws from the long tradition of American protest and movement music. He has collected and performed songs connected to anti-war activism, civil rights and freedom struggles, the LGBTQ movement, efforts to halt nuclear weapons production and the construction of dangerous power plants, as well as the United Farm Workers and other labor organizations.

His performances combine original songs with the music of some of America's most influential folk and protest singers, including Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan and Kate Wolf.

Cahall has performed everywhere from intimate house concerts to political rallies, marches, conferences and large public gatherings. His music continues the tradition of folk singers who tell the stories of ordinary people, challenge injustice and inspire listeners to imagine—and work toward—a more peaceful and compassionate world.Coffee and tea will be served, and the concert is open to everyone.

Annual PIC-nic
Thursday, September 17th from 5:00 - 7:00 pm



Sandstoner Park, 43 Pine St in Potsdam
Save the date! The Potsdam Interfaith Community (PIC) will hold the annual PIC-nic on Thursday, **September 17th** from **5-7 pm** at Sandstoner Park, 43 Pine St in Potsdam.

Please watch for further details. Contact our PIC liaison Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel to learn more.

Soup's on!!

Thursday, September 17th from 6:00 - 7:00 pm

Say it isn't so! Cooler weather is approaching. And there is no better way to stay warm and cozy than with a cup of soup!

Third Thursday Soup is on! Come enjoy dinner with fellow UUs! We will share a simple meal of soup and bread on the third Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. in the Social Room.

Email: outreach@uucantonny.org with questions or to sign up to make soup or bread for the meals.

History Circle - Coots Library

Sunday, September 20 9:00 - 10:15 am

Those interested in our church history are invited to participate in the group. Members review archived documents, create history tidbits for the church newsletter and support other groups and committees who need historical information.

River Woods CUUPs

Sunday, September 20 12:30 - 2:00 pm

CUUPS stands for the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans. It is an organization dedicated to networking Pagan-identified Unitarian Universalists, educating people about Paganism, promoting interfaith dialogue, and supporting Pagan-identified UU religious professionals.

Our event will be a discussion of starting a CUUPS chapter at Canton UU and a celebration of the folk holiday "Mabon"' (first harvest).

The Connections Fair

Sunday, September 20th after the Service

You Are Invited! The Connections Fair is scheduled for **September 20 th**. Join us after the service to learn about opportunities for connection in our church community. From committees and teams to circles and groups, there are many ways to begin or deepen involvement.

There will be tasty snacks and good conversation, too! Contact Robin Collen with questions.

Youth Out Loud

Monday September 28 5:30 - 7:00 pm

Potsdam Pride X The Q Center - LGBTQ+ Youth Meetup, Ages: 12-18, 4th Mondays, 5:30-7:00 pm

Drumming for Universal Peace

Image: "The Songs of Joy" by James Tissot, 1896 and 1902

Tuesday, September 29th from **6:30 to 8:00 pm** in the **Social Room** for "Drumming for Universal Peace".

Join our frame drum group when we will enjoy simple drumming rhythms and (optional) stepping patterns to accompany selected songs from "Dances for Universal Peace"; an event to come soon to our UU Church. Ritual drumming and chanting have been used for centuries across the globe, for spiritual expression and celebration. One example is from the Old Testament, where Miriam led the Israelite women in joyous song and dance with tambourines after crossing the Red Sea. Come join us! All ages and abilities are welcome. No experience needed. Drums provided or bring your own.

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

Sing your hearts out!!!

<u>Come Sing in the UU Choir for these Special Events!</u>
Carol Strome and Paul Siskind invite new and returning singers to sing with our UU Church Choir for special themed services and events throughout the year. Along with being "in the choir" on a regular basis, we're also inviting new singers to join for individual services / events / themes which particularly interest you. This year, many of these special themed services will coincide with weekends when Rev. Kimberley will be preaching live from our pulpit. The Choir generally *rehearses at 9:00-10:10 am on the Sunday the week before* the performance service, *as well as 9:00-10:10 am on the day of the performance* service.

The Beatitudes (Eastern Orthodox Znamenny Chant)
On Sunday **September 27th**, Rev. Kimberley will be preaching about repentance and repair. To reflect her theme, the Choir will perform The Beatitudes, in a compelling arrangement based on the style of znamenny chant from the Eastern Orthodox tradition.
Schedule:

- Sunday 9/20 Rehearsal 9:00-10:10 (in the Choir Room downstairs)
- Sunday 9/27 Rehearsal 9:00-10:10; perform during the Service, 10:30-11:30

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

Help us plan our next Social Justice Initiative!
Our next SJI will focus on the topic of ***Overcoming Isolation***, and will be held during 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 organizing movie screenings, book discussions, guest speakers, and a variety of engaging events for our congregation and the wider community. 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 both along with and separately from the Social Action Team, to give flexibility for people with different schedules to participate.

Helping immigrant communities:
Our Church's Social Action Team works closely with the Immigrant Resources Volunteer Network of St. Lawrence County to provide information, support, and resources to the variety of immigrant communities in our region. If you are interested in learning more about the important work of IRVN-SLC, please send an email to paul@paulsiskind.com, and Paul will add you to the IRVN-SLC email list.

Protecting voting rights, and get-out-the-vote activities:
Protecting voting rights is going to be an important issue this Fall, and the UUA has organized two programs to help congregants and congregations engage with the issues: Side With Love, and UU the Vote. Here are links to information about these projects:

https://www.sidewithlove.org/democracy
https://secure.everyaction.com/3rWCPg0Dukm8xuBs5nV_mQ2
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fgMvc2C0aYtft5hA4Fzn_QOeJHE5lyBs/edit
https://www.sidewithlove.org/solidarity-summits?emci=2a5cb16b-e491-f111-9b33-000d3a11fa30&emdi=a9c52461-9e92-f111-9b33-000d3a11fa30&ceid=20403
https://www.centerforcommonground.org/postcards?emci=2a5cb16b-e491-f111-9b33-000d3a11fa30&emdi=a9c52461-9e92-f111-9b33-000d3a11fa30&ceid=20403
https://votefwd.org/get-involved?emci=2a5cb16b-e491-f111-9b33-000d3a11fa30&emdi=a9c52461-9e92-f111-9b33-000d3a11fa30&ceid=20403

Upcoming Social Action Team meetings:
The Social Action Team invites all congregants to bring us your ideas for social justice issues, events, and projects that you think our congregation might be interested in engaging with. We will work with you to develop and implement your ideas. Please bring your ideas to the SA Team by e-mailing socialaction@uucantonny.org, or by attending our upcoming meeting (please let us know ahead of time if you want to add an item onto our agenda). The SA Team generally meets on the second Tuesday of each month (but check the Church Calendar and newsletters to confirm). We meet in person (in the Romer Room), with a hybrid/Zoom option available:

Social Action Meeting - Tuesday September 22, 7:00-8:30 pm
In the Romer Room, with Zoom option:
https://zoom.us/j/99736094441?pwd=3bpHAb6Rv1fCLVskAta2t5jxb5BtLJ.1
Meeting ID: 997 3609 4441
Passcode: 450380

Committee Focus

Pastoral Care Team

Members of the Pastoral Care Team (Paul Siskind, Sara Hutcheson, Dave Nelson, Leo Burger, Helen Hutchinson, Tom Van de Water, Peter Wyckoff) are available to support you as we welcome Reverend Kimberley into our church and gear up for the new church year.

Members assist the minister in visiting congregants who cannot make it to church, reaching out to congregants whom we have not seen in awhile, and being a listening presence to anyone who is in need. When our minister is unavailable the Pastoral Care Team handles any pastoral care concerns that may arise.

This fall we are trying out a new system, where individual team members will be taking the lead on any pastoral care issues that emerge during a specific month. The individuals listed below will be coordinating requests for support from congregation members, but people seeking attention should feel free to contact any PCT member with whom they might feel comfortable.

September - Peter Wyckoff (315-212-4919)
October - Sara Hutcheson (315-261-8009)
November - Leo Burger (315-212-4382)
December - Paul Siskind (315-353-2389)

If you have a concern you may also call the church office at 315-386-2498, or contact the minister at minister@uucantonny.org

If it is an emergency situation, please dial 911.

What it is:
Support when you need it. Someone with an open heart and listening ear can provide you a confidential space to help process your thoughts and feelings. Times to contact the Pastoral Care Team may include the death of a loved one, the challenges associated with being a caregiver, health issues, making important life decisions, carrying a burden, or experiencing a heavy heart.

What it is not:
Emergency and crisis management, licensed counseling, or therapy. While our pastoral care team is trained and willing to help in any way they can, they are not equipped to handle emergency situations or urgent crises that require the knowledge of licensed professionals. They can guide you to resources that will be of help, though.

Future Events and Notices

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

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