

Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton
NEWSLETTER
December 2024 - THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS



Sunday, December 1

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

Totalitarianism, Abandonment, & Loneliness

The Rev. James Galasinski

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) was an historian, philosopher, and one of the most influential political theorists of her time. Arendt believed that abandonment and loneliness is used by dictators and fascists to make people vulnerable to ideologies that are disconnected from reality. They aim to destroy the space between people, making it difficult for us to think and relate to ourselves. Building community is an act of resistance.

12:15 p.m., First Sunday Listening Circle

Tuesday, December 3

7:00 p.m., UU 101: Growing Our Faith

Wednesday, December 4

8:00 a.m., Building & Grounds Committee

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

Thursday, December 5

5:00 p.m., Game Night

Saturday, December 7

1:00 p.m., Japanese Tea Ceremony (WiSPP)

Sunday, December 8

9:00 a.m., Choir Rehearsal

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

Interpretations of a Rainbow

The Rev. James Galasinski

The poet John Keats feared “philosophy will clip an angel’s wings” and conquer all mysteries. While modern science can unweave the rainbow, our Wordsworth hearts still leap up when we behold a rainbow in the sky. Does knowing dampen the awe of mystery?

Monday, December 9

Noon, Budget & Finance Meeting

Tuesday, December 10

9:30 a.m., Sacred Texts and Coffee

7:00 p.m., Social Action Team Meeting

Wednesday, December 11

7:00 p.m., UU 101: How Our Congregation Works

Thursday, December 12

6:00 p.m., Second Thursday Listening Circle

Friday, December 13

12:30 p.m., Second Friday Listening Circle

6:30 p.m., Jazz & Coffee Night

Sunday, December 15

9:00 a.m., Choir Rehearsal

9:00 a.m., History Circle

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

The UU Holiday Pageant *Carol Zimmerman, DRE*

Our pageant will tell the story of Jesus’ birth. Like all great religious parables that have been told through the ages, this story holds essential spiritual truths for us all.

Monday, December 16

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 17

1:00 p.m., Membership & Outreach Team Meeting

Thursday, December 19

6:00 p.m., Third Thursday Soup

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

Saturday, December 21

7:00 p.m., ***Solstice Celebration***

The Rev. James Galasinski

Soak in the dark and celebrate the return of the sun.

7:00 p.m., UUGeos Yule at Collins house

Sunday, December 22

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

Moments of Surrender *The Rev. James Galasinski*

In Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), addicts describe a moment when they realize they are powerless over their addiction and need help. It involves giving up control over one’s life and addiction and trusting a higher power to guide them to recovery. It may or not be due to addiction, but we all need moments to surrender in.

Monday, December 23

7:00 p.m., UU Men’s Group

Tuesday, December 24

7:00 p.m., ***Christmas Eve*** *The Rev. James Galasinski*

This traditional candlelight service will feature our favorite songs of the season.

Sunday, December 29

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

Renewal *Cathy Crosby and Elias Nelson*

As we prepare for the inevitable challenges of 2025, we will take a moment to renew ourselves: our resolve, our support, our hope. Together, we will ask ourselves the question – how do we keep going? – and will share with each other ways to begin the new year with renewed strength to face those challenges ahead, buoyed by our UU values and sense of community.



JAMES' JOURNAL

Getting Involved on the State Level

On Friday November 15th, the Rev. David Weissbard and I traveled to Albany to attend a Justice Convocation put on by New York Unitarian Universalist Justice (NYUJJ) at the UU Church of Albany. We started with worship. We heard a panel discussion on how to get bills passed in Albany. We had lunch. Then there were four workshops on the 4 main issues NYUJJ is focused on: Medical Aid in Dying, Climate Justice, Housing Justice, and Criminal/Legal Reform.

NYUJJ is a state advocacy network that collaborates with issue partners and UUs across the state to pass bills that are aligned with our values. Many of their meetings are online and they help congregations organize on the grassroots level. If you would like to get more involved there are two easy things you can do:

If you are not already signed up to be on the NYUJJ email list, please do so [here](#)

If you are interested in one of issues, you can join one of the issue teams [here](#)

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "James Galasinski".

The Rev. James Galasinski

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

New Year, New President

I bet your first thought when you read this title was: "Oh no! He's going to comment on the national scene!" Relax. I'm not going there.



I just wanted to say a few things about my experience in the role of Church Council President:

First, it has been such a privilege to become aware of the many issues, big and small, that concern our religious community. Working with the staff, Council members, and folks with individual initiatives has been rewarding.

Second, my faith in our capacity to solve problems together has been reinforced. Problems inevitably show up, but we have a reasonable, respectful, collegial, and generous membership that strives to achieve workable and fair solutions. Although we are freethinkers, we have avoided splitting into factions, a curse that has afflicted other churches from time to time.

Third, I have enjoyed the opportunity to share thoughts with you each month through this item in the Church Newsletter.

So, you might be thinking: "If he had such a positive experience being Church Council President, why didn't he offer to run again for the 2025-2026 term?" The answer is that I do have the energy and enthusiasm, but I have been on committees, teams and Council for quite a few years. I feel strongly that new people should be encouraged to lead. I do not think it is healthy to view certain people as the ones "who will always volunteer". That view provides an easy excuse for others to not fully participate.

December has rolled around again when light is low and “it gets late early” as Yogi Berra would say. We approach the seasonal holidays, the solstice and the new calendar year. It is a time of psychic shifting as we proclaim our hopes, fears and the eternal reality of change. We also approach our Bicentennial Year, having just celebrated our 199th with cake on November 17. Let’s make our Bicentennial a truly historic year!

In closing, I want to thank the members of Church Council for serving during my tenure and the members who will serve starting January 1, 2025.

In a spirit of joy and gratitude,
Jon Montan, Church Council President



FAITH ENGAGEMENT

The holiday season is upon us. Our calendars often fill up during this time of year and it is important to make time for our own and our children’s spiritual well-being. Our religious education ministry will be in the holiday spirit with Fun Days on December 1 and December 22. We will collect the Guest at Your Table Boxes and continue to explore the shared value of generosity on December 8. We will celebrate the season with the all ages holiday pageant on December 15. To close out the year, there will be no religious education program and no nursery on December 29. Happy Holidays!

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

THANK UU



- Thank you to ADK UU Community’s generous gift of \$10,840.84. Unfortunately, their fellowship was dissolved, but our congregations have a long history of cooperation and shared community. Even now, approximately 6-8 people meet regularly at Saranac Village at Will Rogers in Saranac Lake to watch sermons from our church.
- To everyone who attended the Jazz and Coffee Night on November 8th. We raised \$298 for the Church and Community Program.

UU BIRTHDAYS

If you're inclined to send a card, addresses can be found in the [church directory online](#). If you'd like to support the [Caring Circle](#), fill out [this form](#) and join us in supporting members in a variety of ways! Email caringcircle@uucantonny.org to add names that are missing!

December 2: Kim Bouchard, Jay Kepes,
Jan DeWaters
December 3: Julia Freeheart
December 4: Peggy Mooers
December 5: Andrea Smith
December 6: Oscar Sarmiento, Pat Perry
December 8: Pat Alden, Richard Cook
December 10: Jeff Weeks

December 11: Carmen Stuart Fennessey
December 12: Judy DeGraaff
December 13: Stefan Grimberg
December 15: Erik Whittaker
December 20: Shepherd Coffin
December 27: Rhonda Rodriguez
December 28: Susan Powers
December 29: John Danis

FROM THE WORSHIP TEAM

Bicentennial Moments

On November 17th, we celebrated our 199th anniversary – with delicious cake! On Sunday, January 5th, we will begin our year-long celebration of our bicentennial. We will include a “Bicentennial Moment” in our Sunday worship to mark the celebration each and every week. **And we need your help!** Please share with any member of the team ideas for or actual photos, short videos, show & tell, stories of our past, present, and future, or anything else that could be a bicentennial moment. You can also send your idea to worship@uucantonny.org. We look forward to celebrating with you!

Thank You from the Outgoing Chair

As I transition from the chair of the Worship Team to Church Council President, I want to thank the members of the congregation who have always stepped up to make our services transformative. When I became a member of the church about 4 years ago, I jumped in with both feet, confident that no one here would let me “break an ankle”. I was right.

I also wish to extend a special thank you to the talented and dedicated members of the team I have had the pleasure of working with over the last four years: Alison Almasian, Mark Berninghausen, Dave Bradford, Robin Collen, Arthur Freeheart, Rev. James Galasinski, Ben Hunkins, Stevie Michaelson, Mary Michalek, Jon Montan, Rajiv Narula, Dave Nelson, Elias Nelson, Doug Rubio, Maya Thomas, and Arianna Whittaker. When you see any of these individuals, please thank them for their service.

Cathy Crosby, Worship Team Chair

MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH TEAM

Are you interested in offering an event for our church community? The Membership and Outreach team is here to help you! Fill out the [Event Proposal Form](#) and someone from Membership and Outreach will be in touch. A link to the form can always be found at the [Events and Activities tab](#) on our website.

COME SING IN THE UU CHOIR for these Special Events!

Carol Strome and Paul Siskind invite new and returning singers to sing with our UU Church Choir for special themed services/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.

To sign up to sing for any of these events, please email Paul at paul@paulsiskind.com, and he’ll add you to our choir info email list; please sign up 3-4 weeks ahead of the event date, so that Carol and Paul can select music that’s appropriate for the roster. Thanks!

Sunday, December 15: Christmas Pageant

Rehearsals: Sun 12/8 9:00-10:00, and Sun 12/15 9:00-10:00

Sunday, January 19: MLK Day, featuring African American music

Rehearsals: Sun 1/12 9:00-10:00, and Sun 1/19 9:00-10:00

Sunday, March 16 and Thursday, March 20 (evening): Nowruz Celebration (WiSPP)

We'll be performing a Zikr, which is a Sufi devotional praise song.

Rehearsals: Sun 3/2, Sun 3/9, and rehearsal/service on Sun 3/16; performance on Thurs 3/20 (evening)



FUTURE INTERN

February through June we will have intern. He will be focusing on learning about our church and ministry in general. Please welcome Everett!

Tim Everett Stoner is working on getting his bachelor's degree in social work and has a calling to UU ministry. Everett is finishing up his contract with the US military in 2025 as a helicopter mechanic and he is eager for the opportunity to intern here. Everett has 2 boys (4 years old and 13 months old). He and his wife love hiking, and Everett spends his free time woodcarving and playing Dungeons and Dragons.

NEWS FROM THE MAX COOTS LIBRARY

COMMON READ: *African Americans of St. Lawrence County* by Bryan Thompson

As part of our Bicentennial and to celebrate African American History month everyone is invited to read Bryan Thompson's excellent book [*African Americans of St. Lawrence County*](#), which tells the stories of the many early Black people who made a home here. There are copies available in the Max Coots Library.

Bryan, the author and longtime member of our congregation, will lead a discussion after church on **Sunday, February 9, 2025 in the Romer Room from noon until 1:30p.m.**

FROM YOUR SOCIAL ACTION TEAM:

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. Please bring your ideas for issues/events/projects (and for SASOs) to the SA Team by e-mailing Paul Siskind at socialaction@uucantonny.org, or by attending our upcoming meetings via Zoom. We will work with you to develop and implement your ideas:

Upcoming Social Action Meetings:

Tuesday, November 12, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Tuesday December 10, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Attend by Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/91742806459?pwd=dHRhRmFCMnZHRDhRbVB3cktTZzZiUT09>

Meeting ID: 917 4280 6459

Passcode: 744583

CHURCH & COMMUNITY PROGRAM GIVING TREE

The giving tree is back - please take an envelope and make a child's holiday brighter!

With your help, more than 400 children from local families in need will have a happier holiday! Thanks to your monetary donations we will be able to supply vouchers to the parents, who will shop locally for clothing, toys and gifts for their own children. The children also receive new pajamas and hand-knit hats. The families likewise are each given vouchers for food. We have also started gifting the seniors who receive our food deliveries!

You may use a check, cash, credit card, give online at ccpcanton.org - or, use the QR code on the sign near the tree. Take an envelope for all the information you need to donate. Please give generously.

Thank you from all your friends at the Church and Community Program, 30 Court Street, Canton, NY.

BUDDHIST MEDITATION SANGHA ON SUNDAYS

Tom Van de Water will host a weekly Buddhist Meditation Sangha on Sundays from 9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. in the youth group room downstairs. Tom is a Buddhist practitioner, UU congregation member, and past pulpit guest.

The weekly meditation sangha is free, and open to all. No prior experience with Buddhist meditation is required. Participants can borrow small stuff stacks to use with a bath towel or down jackets to sit on the floor. While participants may choose to sit on the floor, the group meditation is fully accessible and participants can sit in chairs or wheelchairs for the meditation.

UU 101

This series of workshops, led by the Rev. James Galasinski, are designed for people new to Unitarian Universalism who want to find out about where we came from, who we are, and how we function as a congregation. These also might be good refreshers for long time UUs. Please come to one or all of them.

UU 101: Growing Our Faith

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

UU 101: How Our Congregation Works

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

All workshops will be held in the Romer Room from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Please register in advance by email: office@uucantonny.org

GAME NIGHT



Join us on Thursday, **December 5 at 5 p.m.** for an evening of board games! Bring your favorite game and friends or just come to join in! We'll meet in the social room and enjoy a relaxing evening of fun and fellowship. Want to stay up to date on all the game nights? Join the [private facebook group](#)! Contact [Carlene Bermann](#) if you have any questions.

JAPANESE TEA CEREMONY

Come to the Zen Buddhist Tea Ceremony Demonstration **Saturday, December 7, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.** The demonstration will be presented by Tea Master Kaori MacWilliams of the Omotesenke School. The ceremony is free and open to all. Please register in advance [here](#).

The Tea Ceremony is a time-honored way of serving matcha. Beyond drinking the tea, the tea ceremony places value on the art of preparing and serving and it is deeply rooted in Zen Buddhism.

The tea ceremony demonstration is part of the year-long World Spiritual Practices Project (WiSPP) grant from the Unitarian Universalist Association funding program (UUF), which is supporting experiences from a diversity of religious and spiritual perspectives that will be conveyed through workshops, worship, speakers, arts and cultural performances, and programming.

You can read more about the ceremony on our website [here](#).

DECEMBER JAZZ AND COFFEE NIGHTS

Friday December 13, 2024: 5 Dots Jazzes up the Holidays
John Danis, the Rev. James Galasinski, Hailey Hodge, Ben Richey, Tim Savage
Your favorite quintet will play your favorite holiday music.

It's free and open to the public, so invite your friends! Donations of non-perishable food items and cash to benefit the Church & Community Program are welcome.

DID YOU KNOW?

Jazz Nights aren't just good for your soul- they also benefit your community:

So far this year we've collected more than \$800 in cash and multiple boxes of food for the Church & Community Program.

This project is made possible with funds from the Statewide Community Re-grants Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by the St. Lawrence County Arts Council.

HISTORY CIRCLE

The UU church history circle will meet on Sunday, December 15 at 9 a.m. in the Coats library.

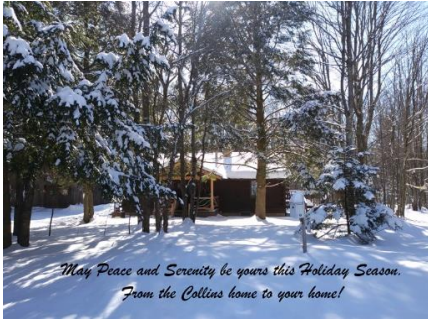
THIRD THURSDAY SOUP

Come enjoy dinner with fellow UUs on **Thursday, December 19 at 6 p.m.** 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 for any of the meals.

SCIENCE BOOK CLUB

On Thursday, December 19, the UU Science Book Club will ponder how the female body drove 200 million years of human evolution. The book is *Eve*, by Cat Bohannon. The group meets by Zoom at 7:00 pm. To sign up, contact Briangardam@gmail.com.



UUGEOS GRAND FINALE

You are invited to our UUGeos Winter Solstice Yule Celebration! Drop by the Collins home at 372 Irish Settlement Rd in Colton, anytime between 2:00 and 4:00 pm on Saturday, December 21st. We will enjoy delicious Three Sisters Stew (first come first serve), swap stories, drum around a campfire, and make pinecone bird feeders. Take home one of Caron's homemade soy candles for your holiday cheer. The porch has a fire table to warm you, and we will also have a fire pit to burn the Yule Log for blessings in the coming year. Enjoy walking our labyrinth or playing on our eco-drumming center.

Geocachers can log your attendance for this event at <https://coord.info/GCAZE5B>. Limited parking available so carpool if you can.

This is our UUGeos grand finale gathering so we hope you will attend!

Staff Schedules for the Church Year:

The Rev. James Galasinski: Available [by email](#) and by appointment **Monday – Thursday**
Carol Zimmerman, DRE: Available [by email](#) **Sunday–Thursday** and by appointment on **Tuesdays & Wednesdays**.
Sara Trimm, Administrator: Available [by email](#) **Monday – Thursday** and **in the office Tuesday & Thursday from 9a.m. – 2p.m.**

The church office is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9a.m. until 2p.m. You can always check [the calendar on our website](#) for details.

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

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

The Rev. James Galasinski, Minister
 Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education
 Sara Trimm, Congregational Administrator
 Betsy Kepes, Music Coordinator
 The Revs. Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeriti
 (315) 386-2498 • office@uucantonny.org • www.uucantonny.org