

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton**  
**NEWSLETTER**  
**February 2025 - THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS**

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**Saturday, February 1**

1:00 p.m., Mindfulness Meditation  
4:00 p.m., UU D&D

**Sunday, February 2**

9:00 a.m., Choir Rehearsal  
9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

***A Small Group of Thoughtful, Committed Citizens  
Can Change the World***

*The Rev. David Weissbard*

There are people who think that Unitarian Universalism is a new thing in the world. I believe it is important to be clear that we are deeply rooted – that members of the Canton Church, for example, have been working to change the world for 200 years! I was invited, as the final graduate of that Theological School, to deliver a sermon this Sunday to illuminate that history as a part of our Bicentennial celebration. I hope you'll join us.

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

**Tuesday, February 4**

6:00 p.m., Soul Cards for Self-Love

**Wednesday, February 5**

8:00 a.m., Building & Grounds Committee  
6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

**Friday, February 7**

5:00 p.m., Game Night

**Saturday, February 8**

4:00 p.m., UU D&D

**Sunday, February 9**

9:00 a.m., Choir Rehearsal  
9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

***The Tao of Leadership*** *The Rev. James Galasinski*

Leadership grounded in effortless action and humbleness is needed more than ever in our community and in our country. Using the ancient Tao Te Ching as a starting point, we will look at leadership as a calling and how the Tao, or the Way, is counter to how leadership is often practiced in our culture.

Noon, Common Read with Bryan S. Thompson

**Tuesday, February 11**

9:30 a.m., Sacred Texts and Coffee  
1:00 p.m., CommComm Meeting  
7:00 p.m., Social Action Team Meeting

**Thursday, February 13**

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

**Friday, February 14**

12:30 p.m., Second Friday Listening Circle  
6:00 p.m., Valentines Day Salsa Dance

**Saturday, February 15**

4:00 p.m., UU D&D

**Sunday, February 16**

9:00 a.m., History Circle  
9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

***Smooth Stones of Liberal Religion 2.0***

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

We will explore what makes our religious movement unique by looking at the UU theologian James Luther Adams. He says that one of our 5 foundational stones is that we freely choose to enter into relationship with one another.

11:30 a.m., Chili Cookoff

**Monday, February 17 – Mondays with Max**

**Tuesday, February 18**

1:30 p.m., Membership & Outreach Team Meeting  
6:30 p.m., Religious Education Committee Meeting

**Wednesday, February 19**

6:30 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

**Thursday, February 20**

6:00 p.m., Third Thursday Soup  
7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

**Saturday, February 22**

4:00 p.m., UU D&D

**Sunday, February 23**

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

***Our Connections to the Selma Awakenings***

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

In March of 1965 the Rev. Dr. MLK, Jr put out a call to clergy to show up in Selma to protest unfair voting practices. A large contingency of UUs showed up, some with ties to our congregation. In many ways this was a turning point in our faith's relationship with racial justice.

**Tuesday, February 25**

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

**Thursday, February 27**

7:00 p.m., UU 201 History & Theology



## **JAMES' JOURNAL**

### **The Complexities of History**

I've always been intrigued by history, how the past informs the present and how, over time, facts of the past get reinterpreted.

A few months ago, I was asked to be part of a small team of former and current St. Lawrence University faculty and staff and alums to investigate the life of the Rev. Jeffrey W. Campbell. He is known as the first Black graduate of St. Lawrence University. He ran for governor of Massachusetts and while living in England tutored miners and other workers in literature, philosophy, and history. He was also for 3 decades a high school English teacher at the Putney School. The whole time he was an ordained Universalist and Unitarian minister who never got a full-time position because he was Black. He was many things. Even the label of "Black" does not quite get at his self-identity because he was mixed race and, in his writings, identifies more with being a New Englander, socialist and Universalist more than any other identities. He was an integrator of white institutions for sure. In talking to people that knew him I found out he was theatrical, poetic, and charismatic. The hope is that this research can eventually become a book. My role is to give a UU minister's perspective.

I am beginning to see the complexities of the Rev. Campbell. Our faith's history is also complex. Whether in sermon or workshop, I hope to explore these complexities as we celebrate our bicentennial year.

In Peace,

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

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

## **FAITH ENGAGEMENT**

Love will be the theme in religious education for the month of February! Love is at the center of our shared values and offers an opportunity to identify all the ways love shows up in our lives. I feel the love of this church community every day. From the support of Sara, our office administrator, to all the members of the RE teaching teams who show up and teach our children each Sunday. From folx asking me how I am doing as I continue to care for my mother to working with different committee members in advancing the mission of our church. And from the warm smiles and small conversations with children to kind words shared after sharing a story during worship. I feel the love and try hard to reciprocate it back. Where is love showing up for you right now?



Our calendar for religious education in February includes age specific classes on February 2 and 9, a L.O.V.E.D program on February 16 and a Fun Day on February 23. Each week we will explore love at the center through stories, Lego building, making and discussions. A sneak peek into March includes Multigenerational Worship and Everybody's Birthday Party on March 2. If you are interested in baking a cake for the party, please let me know via email.

Let us find love at the center of all we do. May it be so.

*Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education*

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT



I sat down to draft my first newsletter message as Council President with lyrics from this morning's service honoring Martin Luther King Jr. playing on a loop in my head:

*It's the very heart of humanity: none of us are free if one of us is chained.  
None of us are free.\**

And

*Folks you'd better stop and think  
Everybody knows we're on the brink  
What will happen, now that the King of love is dead?*

I am confident that I am not the only one moved to tears by Paul Siskind's powerful performance of this mournful song by Gene Taylor and Nina Simone.

The prophetic words above continue to ring because, when you read this, we will have begun what is likely to be a trying four years for our nation. Imposition of oppressive policies and legislation and repeal of earth- and human-saving regulation will challenge our Unitarian Universalist values.

However, I begin my presidential term knowing that our strong and resilient congregation stands ready to meet these challenges. We will not simply bemoan and complain but will express our values in the coming months through our actions, as modeled by the "King of love."

Thank you for giving me the honor of serving this community in my new role. We will surely experience hardships ahead, but we will also work together toward a "world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all."

Take care,  
Cathy Crosby, Church Council President

\*None of Us Are Free by Barry Mann, Cynthia Weill, and Brenda Russell, arranged by Paul Siskind.

## THANK UU



- Miles Manchester for working with some of our children to remove, empty and clean the Bee Hotel in the pollinator garden.
- Jim Williams and Valerie Ingram for helping with the Together at the Table Dinner.
- Jim Williams and his coworker, Laurie for providing the "Kids on the Block" presentation in religious education.
- To all those who donated to the Guest at Your Table fundraiser. We raised just over \$200.

## 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](#), fill out [this form](#) and join us in supporting members in a variety of ways! Email [caringcircle@uucantonny.org](mailto:caringcircle@uucantonny.org) to add any birthday names that are missing!

- February 1 Maggie Hockett
- February 4 David Bradford
- February 5 Gary Berk, Oscar Sarmiento
- February 6 Eileen Wheeler, Claire Thomas, Roger Hutchinson, Ellie Siegfried
- February 8 Pat Alden
- February 11 Will Siegfried
- February 13 Jill Rubio
- February 15 Jan Hutslar
- February 18 Lois Cutter
- February 21 Stevie Michaelson, Esther Oey
- February 23 Jim Michaelson, Isaac Tavernier
- February 25 Bonnie Danis
- February 26 Mark Sturges
- February 29 Betsy Kepes

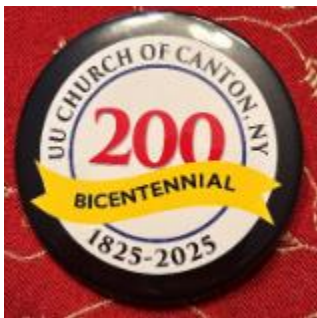
### **BICENTENNIAL EVENTS**

Many thanks to all those who participated and supported the Bicentennial Kick Off on Sunday, January 5. It was exciting to gather together in the first of many celebrations in the coming year. Special thanks to Stevie Michaelson for the 40th year of her Special New Year's Bouillon. Thanks also to Jenn Whittaker and Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel for their vegetarian soups. And special shout-out to Earthbound Bakery and the exquisite "200" artisan bread!

Sunday, February 2 will be the next Bicentennial Sunday Service with Rev. David Weissbard in the pulpit. Please join us as we listen to the stories and insights from the very last graduate from St. Lawrence Seminary.

### **MONDAYS WITH MAX**

Those of us who had the pleasure of listening to Dr. Rev. Max Coots preach from our pulpit for thirty-four years and for those of us who did not but have heard about his sermons from long-time members, please look for the Mondays with Max link on the bicentennial webpage. Mondays With Max is an opportunity to listen to recorded sermons from Max's book, *Leaning Against the Wind*. The first sermon in the series was posted on January 27. The next sermon will be posted on February 17. Future sermons will be posted during three-week intervals. For more information on Mondays with Max, [click here](#).



### **BICENTENNIAL BUTTONS**

If you have not picked up your bicentennial button, stop by the office or speak with a member of our bicentennial team. Please consider wearing your button during the week (not just on Sundays at church) to let the wider world know about our milestone anniversary. Let your SLU and SUNY Canton friends know that members of our church were instrumental in the founding of both institutions. "Button Up" and show your UU pride!



## COMMON READ: Discovering African American Pioneer History in St. Lawrence County

Explore the remarkable contributions of African Americans to St. Lawrence County through Bryan S. Thompson's inspiring book, *African Americans of St. Lawrence County: North Country Pioneers*. This compelling work brings to light the resilience, determination, and pioneering spirit of African Americans who helped shape the region's identity.

To celebrate and honor these stories, everyone is invited to a book discussion on **Sunday, February 9, at 12:00 noon, in the Romer Room**. This event will create a space to learn about the rich and often overlooked history of African Americans in the North Country, fostering dialogue about their impact and legacy.

This discussion is open to all, whether or not you have read the book, and provides an opportunity to connect with the stories of trailblazers whose courage and contributions paved the way for generations to come. Light refreshments will be served.

## ROCK FOUNDATION GRANT RECEIVED

Many thanks to the Building and Grounds committee members who worked to complete a grant application for the Rock Foundation, which resulted in a successful grant of \$25,000 to help us replace the aging heating system here at the church. More details about the grant award and furnace replacement will come soon!

## COME SING IN THE UU CHOIR for these Special Events!



Carol Strome and Paul Siskind invite you to sing with our UU Church Choir for special themed services and events throughout the year. The Choir rehearses from 9 -10 a.m. on the Sunday before and on the Sunday of the performance service.

To sign up to sing for any of these events, please e-mail Paul at [paul@paulsiskind.com](mailto:paul@paulsiskind.com), and he'll add you to our choir info email list; please sign up 2-3 weeks ahead of the event date, so that Carol and Paul can select music that's appropriate for the roster. Thanks!

**-Sunday, February 9:** Rehearsals: Sundays February 2 & 9 at 9 a.m.

**-Sunday, March 16 & Thursday, March 20: Nowruz Celebration (WiSPP)** We'll be performing a Zikr, which is a Sufi devotional praise song. Rehearsals: Sundays March 2, 9, and 16 at 9 a.m.; with a performance again on Thursday March 20 in the evening.

## FROM YOUR SOCIAL ACTION TEAM:

### Donations for the [Church and Community Program](#):

In December, through fund-raising and food donations, our Church was one of the organizations that helped the Church and Community Program serve 510 people in 226 households. Needs continue throughout the year. Donations of food (especially jackets, hats, and gloves) clothing can be dropped

off at CCP at 30 Court Street in Canton. There is also a food box here at church if you want to bring things with you to the church for drop off.

### **Nominations for the [Rachel Somers Grant Social Action Award](#):**

Each year, we recognize a member of the North Country community who makes a difference in our community with the Rachel Somers Grant Social Action Award. The award honors those who exemplify the characteristics Rachel showed in her life:

- promote local grassroots efforts as a means of achieving social change
- advocate on behalf of social justice, especially for those who are marginalized in some way
- are actively involved in a variety of local groups working for a better community
- provide leadership in promoting social justice and change
- organize and support community members in pursuit of social justice

If you would like to nominate someone, please explain how the nominee exemplifies these characteristics and submit your nomination to: [socialaction@uucantonny.org](mailto:socialaction@uucantonny.org)



### **Medical Aid in Dying:**

This spring, our congregation will continue supporting the campaign to pass the Medical Aid in Dying bill at the State Capitol. The legislation would allow a terminally ill adult with a prognosis of 6 months or less to live to have the option to request, obtain, and decide to ingest medication to die peacefully in their sleep if their suffering is unbearable; it is sometimes referred to as Death with Dignity.

If you would like to be on our e-mail list about MAiD events, please contact [paul@paulsiskind.com](mailto:paul@paulsiskind.com).

### **Social Action Shared Offerings (SASO)s:**

About once a month, our congregation donates our weekly offering collection to a worthy social service or social justice organization. *Suggestions for organizations to support with SASOs are welcome throughout the year; [use this link](#) to nominate an organization for a SASO:*

### **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. *Please bring your ideas for issues/events/projects to the SA Team by e-mailing [socialaction@uucantonny.org](mailto:socialaction@uucantonny.org), or by attending ([by Zoom](#)) our next meeting on **Tuesday, February 11 at 7 p.m.** We will work with you to develop and implement your ideas.*

## **WINTER POTLUCKS ARE COMING SOON – SIGN UP AS A HOST TODAY!**

Winter potlucks are casual gatherings during the months of January, February, and March.

Here's how they work: A host family sets a date and time to host a meal at their home. They can be held after church, on a weekend evening, or some other time. Sometimes there might be a theme, like a book discussion or sledding activity. Sometimes the gathering is for adults only and others are for families. Guests sign up to attend and then communicate with the host to choose what to bring. If you are interested in HOSTING, please contact Jenn Whittaker at [outreach@uucantonny.org](mailto:outreach@uucantonny.org), sign up on this [Google form](#), or look for a Host Sign-up in the Social Room.

If you are interested in being a GUEST, look for Potluck sign-ups in the Social Room very soon. Please consider hosting AND being a guest. This is a wonderful way to get through the winter months together.

## BUDDHIST MEDITATION SANGHA

Our UU weekly meditation sangha is up and "sitting." We used to meet prior to the pandemic and have started back up again on **Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m.** in the youth group room downstairs.



## UUs and D&D

Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) has seen a resurgence in recent years due to appearances in pop culture and the pandemic. But, is it possible that Dungeons & Dragons can be more than just a game? Join us **Saturdays at 4 p.m.** in the Social Room for an afternoon of D&D.

All ages are welcome, though younger brave hearts should bring an adult mentor. Let us know if you'll join us by emailing [toddamoe@gmail.com](mailto:toddamoe@gmail.com).



## MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

**On Saturday, February 1, 2025, 1 p.m. until 3 p.m.**, Jenna Joya Blondel will lead a two-hour workshop introducing the spiritual practices of meditation in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh, focusing on emotion regulation, stress response, memory, learning, and perspective-taking. Participants will learn breathing, walking, and eating meditation, and will have the opportunity to share experiences and ask questions. No prior meditation

experience is needed, and there will not be a need to sit on the floor. This event is free and open to the public as part of the year-long World Spiritual Practices Project (WiSPP) grant from the Unitarian Universalist Association funding program (UUFPP). Advance registration is appreciated. You can register online [here](#).

## SOUL CARDS FOR SELF-LOVE

**On Tuesday, February 4 at 6 p.m.**, Kathy 'Kat' Wilcox, a Potsdam-based multi-modal holistic healing practitioner, will lead a workshop to explore how Soul Cards and other card decks can be used as a tool for personal growth, insight, and inner exploration.



This workshop explores how Oracle cards can be used as a tool for personal growth, insight, and inner exploration. The workshop will begin with a guided meditation aligned with the workshop theme, to settle the mind and set an intention to support insight and openness. Participants will enjoy warmup activities to activate their creativity, intuition, and connect with the energy of self-love.

Following these activities, participants will have an opportunity to work with the Oracle cards through a spread that explores ways that we can be kinder and more loving to ourselves in order to support healing and growth. Please [register in advance here](#).



## GAME NIGHT

Join us on Friday, **February 7 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.

## SALSA DANCING on VALENTINES DAY

**Friday, February 14, 6 p.m. – 7: 30 p.m.** Spice up your Valentine's Day evening with Latin rhythms. Come out to dance salsa. Love dance, love yourself, and love salsa! Dress up if you want, wear a fedora, come solo or bring a partner. On-site childcare will be available.

Jeanna Matthews, founder of the North Country Latin Dance community, will lead dancers through the fundamentals of salsa including leading and following and a variety of dance moves such as shoulder check and hairbrush, and basic steps like cumbia, and a variety of turn patterns.

There are many reasons to love salsa! It's a beautiful dance that's playful, passionate and romantic with high-energy rhythms. Spend your Valentine's Day evening dancing!

The event is free and all are welcome.

## ANNUAL UU CHILI FEST

Make plans to attend the Chili Fest on **Sunday, February 16** after worship.

To enter your chili in the competition, please email [toddamoe@gmail.com](mailto:toddamoe@gmail.com) to register and get all the details.



If you want to try all the chilis and vote for the best, simply show up on Sunday, February 16 with dollar bills to cast your vote(s).

## THIRD THURSDAY SOUP

Come enjoy dinner with fellow UUs on **Thursday, February 20 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](mailto:outreach@uucantonny.org) with questions or to sign up to make soup for any of the meals.



## SCIENCE BOOK CLUB

On Thursday, January 20, the UU Science Book Club will discuss *Jellyfish Age Backwards* by Nicklas Brandberg. We will explore unlocking the keys to longevity. We meet by Zoom at 7:00 pm. For info, contact [briangardam@gmail.com](mailto:briangardam@gmail.com).

## UU 201: HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

**Thursday, February 27** from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Romer Room: **Black Pioneering Ministers**

Hear the stories of the early Universalist and Unitarian ministers. They wanted to serve and listened to their call but faced racism. In the process they have left a lasting legacy that is still felt today.

### 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

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