

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



Saturday, March 1
4:00 p.m., UU D&D

Sunday, March 2

9:00 a.m., Choir Rehearsal

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

Women's Work *Carol Zimmerman, DRE*

Throughout history women's work has included the undervalued and unpaid labor of housekeeping and child-rearing. However, women from our local region and our UU faith found work that changed lives and the world around them. We will celebrate these some amazing women with the songs by Adirondack singer, Peggy Lynn and through UU stories.

11:30 a.m., Everybody's Birthday Party

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

2:00 p.m., Facing the Present with Heart

Wednesday, March 5

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

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

Saturday, March 8

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

Sunday, March 9

9:00 a.m., Choir Rehearsal

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

The Reverend Harry Adams Hersey: The Cup Half Full

Bryan Thompson, Pulpit Guest

The Rev. Hersey was the only minister in St. Lawrence County to publicly criticize the local KKK during their rise in the 1920's.

Join Bryan Thompson on this Bicentennial Sunday to learn about this strong advocate of progressive liberal religion who led our congregation through troubled times.

Noon, SMARTIE Goal Discussion w/Church Council

Tuesday, March 11

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

1:00 p.m., CommComm Meeting

6:00 p.m., Living the Ayurvedic Lifestyle

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

Thursday, March 13

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

Friday, March 14

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

5:00 p.m., Game Night

Saturday, March 15

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

Sunday, March 16

9:00 a.m., History Circle

9:00 a.m., Choir Rehearsal

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

Nowruz *The Rev. James Galasinski*

Nowruz is the Iranian and Kurdish new year, an ancient central Asian and Middle Eastern cultural celebration of spring, and a

religious holiday for Zoroastrians, Baha'is, and Ismaili Shiite Muslims. It might feel a little early to celebrate spring but it has been a long cold winter.

11:30 a.m., Chili Cookoff

Monday, March 17 – Mondays with Max

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 18

1:30 p.m., Membership & Outreach Team Meeting

6:00 p.m., History of Nordic Runes Workshop

6:30 p.m., Religious Education Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 19

7:00 p.m., Committee Chairs Meeting

Thursday, March 20

6:00 p.m., 3rd Thursday Soup & Nowruz Celebration

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

Saturday, March 22

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

Sunday, March 23

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

Smooth Stones of Liberal Religion: Freedom

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.

Tuesday, March 25

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

Wednesday, March 26

Noon, Budget & Finance Meeting

Thursday, March 27

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

Friday, March 28

6:00 p.m., Jazz & Coffee Night

Saturday, March 29

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

Sunday, March 30

9:30 a.m., Buddhist Meditation Sangha

The Covenant of Our Faith

The Rev. James Galasinski

RE, Church Council, the Men's Group, and Listening Circles all have covenants. They are living statements that illustrate how we want to be together. They are sacred promises to each other and to something larger than ourselves.

Monday, March 31

7:00 p.m., UU Men's Group

Our ELEVATOR IS OUT OF ORDER at the moment. We were hoping for a simple fix but it looks like it will be a major repair that could take a few weeks. If you have any questions about building accessibility, please reach out to the office. We apologize for any inconvenience.



JAMES' JOURNAL

General Assembly in Baltimore, MD June 18-22, 2025

In a sports arena connected to a convention center by a skywalk, hockey championship banners hang from the rafters. There are the annoying rapidly changing electronic advertisements. It is a very ordinary space. But there is energy in the room. The band starts with "Enter, Rejoice, and Come In" and thousands of Unitarian Universalists are singing and swaying, some are even dancing. 100's of unique colorful handmade banners that feature the names Unity Temple and Unity Unitarian, while most of the others have "First" in their title. It's all rather beautiful. I shout and cheer for the churches I know. I take a moment to just pay attention, and I am flooded with love. It was a whole exhausting day of travel to get here but it all seems worth it now. This is the opening ceremony and banner parade at the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly (GA). GA is the annual business meeting of our wider movement. But it's more than business meetings. It's inspiring worship. It's having a voice in the future of our faith. It's learning in workshops from some of the most innovative religious professionals. It's hearing world class speakers.

GA is an experience like no other. On this joyful pilgrimage you might realize you are part of that which is greater than you. You might have lunch with someone that lives 2,000 miles away and find out your congregations are working on the same social justice projects or coming across a similar issue.

I always come away energized and transformed. It can be a big time and money commitment. If you would like to go, money should not be an obstacle. Church Council has allocated money to offset the cost. If you volunteer, the UUA will waive registration. There are discounts available for first-time attendees and a limited number of scholarships. Since this year's GA is Baltimore, MD carpooling would be a possibility. Please see below for more information.

In Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Galasinski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. James Galasinski

FAITH ENGAGEMENT

Our faith looks to other religious traditions to inspire our ethical and spiritual lives. With the adoption of our new shared values, this is represented by Pluralism: We are all sacred beings, diverse in culture, experience, and theology. We have many paths to find the sacred.



Sunday, March 2 will find us all together in the sanctuary for the multigenerational worship service followed by Everybody's Birthday Party with a theme of favorite colors. Religious education in March will focus on pluralism with age specific classes of Spirit Play, Lego ValUUES, MakerSpace and Youth

Group on March 9 and 16, and all age L.O.V.E.D programs with guest presenters on March 23 and 30. Check the church website for more details.

May we find our paths to the sacred and appreciate the culture, experience and theology of others. Blessed be.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education



FROM OUR PRESIDENT Winter of '25 (Not '21)

Not venturing out my door for 3 days, wearing my fleece pajama bottoms in the middle of the day, raiding my freezer for dinner to avoid going to the grocery store... No, I am not describing my life during the height of COVID but last weekend during our snowstorm. Nature (and NYS Department of Transportation) imposed a welcome respite, but the snowstorm also imposed unwelcome isolation and awakened memories of mid-winter 2021.

Fortunately, we are not in the mid-winter of 2021 but 2025. The streets have cleared (as much as they do in the North Country in winter), the mounds of snow are beginning to melt, and we are out and about again. But most importantly, unlike mid-winter 2021, we can enjoy the privilege of spending time with our friends and family face-to-face. So, let's take advantage of it.

I encourage you to sign up for one of the several winter potlucks happening during the month of March at the homes of various church members. You can sign up after church during social hour or by using the online forms you will find on [our website here](#).

And speaking of eating together, the snowstorm may have postponed the Chili Fest but did not dampen our chili spirits! The Chili Fest has been rescheduled for Sunday, March 16th after church. If you would like to share your chili making talents with the rest of us, drop a note to [Todd Moe](#).

Enjoy your time together and take care,

Cathy Crosby, Church Council President

THANK UU

- Thank you to Louise Bixby for cleaning up after the Common Read on February 9.
- Thank you to Bryan Thompson for leading a fascinating Common Read discussion on his book, *African Americans of St. Lawrence County*.
- Thank you to Pete Beekman and Pete Wyckoff for attending to the Church's frozen pipes.



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 to add any birthday names that are missing!

March 5	Eden Terrell
March 9	Janice Westerling, Elian Erickson
March 13	Walden Nelson
March 20	Caron Collins, Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel
March 22	Natalie Panshin
March 26	Kurt Terrell
March 29	Richard Grover, Danny Thomas



BICENTENNIAL EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE POSTCARDS - YOUR HELP NEEDED!

The Team is sending out invitations for our major **Bicentennial Celebration Events November 13-16, 2025**. We want to include everyone who would like to celebrate this major milestone with us. Please think of people we should invite who are NOT currently on our mailing lists. *We are especially interested in the contact information of adult aged children who were engaged in church life as youth.* We are hoping our Bicentennial Week will provide a fun homecoming opportunity for all our families. You can use [this online form](#) to share any contact information you have.

BICENTENNIAL BUTTONS STILL AVAILABLE IN THE OFFICE- Pick yours up today and wear it with pride!

COMMITTEE CHAIR / TEAM LEAD MEETING

The annual Committee Chair/Team Lead Meeting will be held **Wednesday, March 19th at 7pm** in the Romer Room. Chairs/leads are asked to RSVP or send questions to Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel at vicepresident@uucantonny.org.

RSG SOCIAL ACTION AWARD

Our Social Action Team is receiving nominations for the 2025 [Rachel Somers Grant Social Action Award](#). We are seeking nominations for individuals who make a difference through their grassroots efforts in pursuit of social justice for all.

The award was established in 1990 in memory of Rachel Somers Grant to honor those who work, as Rachel did, to make our community more humane and progressive. Rachel was a teacher and activist who lived in Canton from 1977 until her death in 1990. Each year since her passing we have recognized an individual who is making a difference in the North Country. Recent recipients of the award include John Tenbusch, Kathleen Stein, Ginger Story-Welch, and Eileen Raymond.

Nominations for the 2025 RSG Social Action Award should explain how the nominee exemplifies some of the following criteria:

- Promotes local grassroots efforts as a means of achieving social change
- Advocates on behalf of social justice, especially for those who are marginalized in some way
- Is actively involved in a variety of local groups working for a better community

- Provides leadership in promoting social justice and change
- Organizes and supports community members in pursuit of social justice.

This is a wonderful way to recognize and celebrate people who give so much and who often are otherwise underrecognized. Please consider nominating someone you know; it need not be a UU friend or member. Please send nominations via email to our [Social Action team](#) no later than **Friday, April 4, 2025**.

CHURCH COUNCIL SMARTIE GOALS

On Sunday, March 9, at noon in the Romer Room, you are invited to join an all-ages conversation about how the **Religious Education program** can best meet the spiritual needs our community.

Church Council recently formulated 3 goals that would enhance the vitality and capability of our congregation: to ensure we are satisfying the inward needs of our members, to have a meaningful presence in the wider community, and to enhance the Religious Education program.

A combined group of Church Council and Religious Education Committee members have been using the SMARTIE Goal outline to organize a goal that is Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time Bound, Inclusive and Equitable. We think these are good metrics to guide us.

In an effort to have the Religious Education program provide a meaningful and accessible place in the lives of members of the congregation, we are considering an expansion beyond the confines of classes downstairs on Sunday mornings. The RE program has been challenged by a dramatic decrease in regular Sunday attendance downstairs as well as a significant decrease in volunteers available to assist on Sundays.

We are exploring other models of religious education including more multi-generational services, older youth service projects, Our Whole Lives education to more age groups, once a month downstairs RE program during the service, and more.

We are still deciding on a direction and welcome all members and friends of the congregation, of all ages, to join us in the Romer Room at noon on March 9th. See what ideas are on the board and add your voice to the conversation of how we all can work together to help the RE program meet the needs of the Congregation.

COME SING IN THE UU CHOIR

For Nowruz Celebration (WiSPP) On Sunday, March 16 & Thursday, March 20: We'll be performing a Zikr, which is a Sufi devotional praise song. There will be 3 rehearsals and 2 performances—one on Sunday during worship, and another as Third Thursday Soup at 6 p.m. on March 20.

Rehearsals: Sundays March 2, 9, and 16 at 9 a.m.; with performances on Sunday, March 16 and Thursday March 20 in the evening.

If you can sing with us, we'd like you to attend both Sunday rehearsals on 3/2 and 3/9 if possible, but at least one is necessary. Similarly, it would be great if you could sing for both performances, but if you can only do one of them, we still invite you to sing. *To sign up, please e-mail Paul Siskind at paul@paulsiskind.com*

FROM THE WORSHIP TEAM

Last month, the Worship Team got together to begin the "Worship for Transformation" training by Rev. Erika Hewitt, which is part of the UUA's "Leadership Training by Congregational Role" series. In our busy lives and in a team that includes members who are out of state for part of the year, it was especially meaningful to be able to meet in person to expand our understanding of worship. While the training itself was insightful, we were additionally grateful to have a chance to be together as a team to converse, learn, and contemplate the part that we play in the worship experience.

FROM YOUR SOCIAL ACTION TEAM:

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. Only 10 states allow medical aid in dying to be available, and the issue is one of the priority issues for [NYUU Justice](#). [Compassion & Choices](#) organizes the legislative efforts, and they also offer [valuable information and resources](#) for individuals and families facing end-of-life decisions.

Letter writing session after Church on Sunday, March 30: We will be hosting a letter-writing session right after the service. All congregants and friends are invited to write letters to their legislators. We'll provide the materials and information.

UUs rally for MAiD at the State Capitol in Albany on Tuesday, March 25: NYUU Justice is organizing UUs and friends from around the state to join Compassion & Choices to rally in support of the bill. Depending on how many people from our area want to attend, we will organize carpools and help find lodging options. More details will be forthcoming, but for now, save the date: **3/25 in Albany**. *If you would like to be on our e-mail list about MAiD events, please contact paul@paulsiskind.com.*

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, or by attending ([by Zoom](#)) our next meeting on **Tuesday, March 11 at 7 p.m.** We will work with you to develop and implement your ideas.*

WINTER POTLUCKS

[Winter potlucks](#) are a wonderful way to get through the winter months together! 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.

Look for Potluck sign-ups in the Social Room or [sign up online here](#).

BUDDHIST MEDITATION SANGHA

Our UU weekly meditation sangha is up and "sitting" on **Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m.** in the youth group room downstairs. All are welcome to attend- no registration is needed.



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.



FACING THE PRESENT WITH HEART

In these challenging times, we are not alone. Please join us in [Facing the Present with Heart](#): a mindful listening circle, in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh.

We will practice breathing meditation to reduce stress and facilitate understanding and compassion. And we will listen deeply and mindfully to each other as we share how we're feeling, our struggles, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears.

Facilitated by Jenna Joya Blondel, PhD, Minister of Walking Prayer, we will meet on the first Sunday of the month, beginning March 2, from 2 to 3 p.m. in Canton at the Unitarian Universalist Church; and on the third Thursday of the month, beginning March 20, from 6 to 7 p.m. in Potsdam at Trillium at the Presbyterian Church. There is no charge, and all are welcome.

LIVING AN AYURVEDA LIFESTYLE (WiSPP) Tuesday, March 11 at 6 p.m. with Kelly Burnham.

[This workshop](#) is an introduction to the major tenets or beliefs of Ayurveda led by Kelly Burnham, registered yoga teacher since 2016, and 500-hour certified instructor in the Ashtanga Yoga tradition, and solo entrepreneur and proprietor of Flying Lotus Ayurveda & Yoga.

Ayurveda is based on ancient Hindu philosophical teachings; it's the "study of life" with rituals, practices, and herbal remedies. It does not have to be religious per se, but it is inherently spiritual. The workshop will explore daily practices for self-care as well as yoga for the various "doshas" and seasons of the year or seasons of life and introduce the foundations of the traditional medical system of Ayurveda with practice of yoga asana, chanting mantra, meditation, and massage. Participants will sample Ayurvedic treats and teas. This workshop will scratch the surface of the broad study of Ayurveda. All participants will receive takeaway materials to aid the learning of the doshas and yoga sequences. No prior experience in yoga or Ayurveda is necessary. Please [register in advance here](#).

HISTORY OF NORDIC RUNES (WiSPP)
Tuesday, March 18 at 6 p.m. with Kat Wilcox.

Nordic runes are an ancient alphabet of phonetic symbols used by Vikings and other Germanic and Scandinavian peoples. Nordic rune casting is a practice that involves arranging runes in a pattern or randomly to gain guidance. In some modern Pagan traditions, divination is done by casting runes. Much like reading Tarot cards, rune casting isn't fortune-telling or predicting the future. Instead, it's a guidance tool that works with your subconscious to help solve problems by looking at potential outcomes.

The introduction to using runes for self-reflection will open opportunities to empower workshop participants to make lifestyle changes that align with the goal of living one's life with compassion, kindness, acceptance, and love. To register go to <https://forms.gle/KLfur5MAVzBb5n8x5>



GAME NIGHT

Join us on Friday, **March 14 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.

ANNUAL UU CHILI FEST

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

To enter your chili in the competition, please email 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, March 16 with dollar bills to cast your vote(s).

THIRD THURSDAY SOUP AND NOWRUZ CELEBRATION

Come enjoy dinner with fellow UUs on **Thursday, March 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. This month we will have a [special celebration of Nowruz](#) during our meal.

Nowruz is the Iranian (Persian) New Year and the first day of spring. The holiday is celebrated by 300 million people around the world. The festival based on the Northern Hemisphere spring equinox, marks the first day of a new year on the Solar Hijri calendar; and usually coincides with a date between 19 March and 22 March on the Gregorian calendar. The exact date of Nowruz varies across countries depending on time zones.

The secular event symbolizes renewal and harmony with nature. Customs for the festival include various fire and water rituals, celebratory dances, gift exchanges, and poetry recitations, among others; these observances differ between the cultures of the diverse communities that celebrate the holiday.

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

SCIENCE BOOK CLUB

In March, the UU Science Book Club is reading *The Coming Wave* by Mustafa Suleyman. We will meet by Zoom at 7:00 pm on March 20 to discuss the emerging dominance of artificial intelligence. To join us, contact briangardam@gmail.com.

UU 201: HISTORY AND THEOLOGY Thursday, March 27 at 7 p.m.

In this workshop led by the Rev. James Galasinski, you will learn about the First Female Unitarian and Universalist Ministers. In honor of Women's History Month we will learn the inspiring stories of pioneering women that answered the call of ministry.

JAZZ NIGHT & COFFEE BAR

FRIDAY, MARCH 28
6:30 – 8:30 p.m. in the Social Room



The house band that started it all will sing and play jazz standards, originals, funk, straight ahead, blues, and Latin styles. Hailey Hodge - Vocals, John Danis EWI and vocals, Ben Richey - Drums, Tim Savage - Piano, the Rev. James Galasinski - Bass

This event is open to the public so be sure to invite your friends! Admission is free, but donations of non-perishable food items for the Church and Community Food Pantry are requested.

UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY JUNE 2025

Please consider attending this June 18-22, 2025 in Baltimore, MD. General Assembly provides an opportunity to connect with others from around the country who share our love of our free faith. We need delegates. You can find more information about GA here: <https://www.uua.org/ga>. Church Council has set aside special funds to help defray the cost of attendance and financial aid is available from the UUA (<https://www.uua.org/ga/registration/financialaid/scholarships>). If you have interest in attending this year's General Assembly, please contact Rev. James (minister@uucantonny.org) or Church Council President Cathy Crosby (president@uucantonny.org).



Potsdam Interfaith Community (PIC) Annual Festival of Sacred Music and Text is scheduled for Sunday, April 27th. Please watch for further details in church and local media. Contact Pat Alden or Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel, our PIC co-liaisons, with questions.

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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