

Issue
MAY 2025

The Foreword

The Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst
6320 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221
634-3010 (x101 for office)
Office Hours Tues.—Fri. 9am to 2pm www.uuamherst.org



UU AMHERST

*Fostering Justice
and Compassion*

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Minister Emerita

Rev. Maureen Q. Thitchener



Photo of Otsego Lake, Cooperstown, NY by Elaine Harrigan

The Peace of Wild Things

by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Our Covenant

*Together we promise:
To gather in compassionate
community,
To celebrate diversity of thought and
unity of spirit;
And to seek wholeness for ourselves,
our children, and our world.*



MINISTER’S CORNER

Creativity... So, you either perked up or slumped in defeat; there is rarely a neutral space when the topic of creativity is brought up. Here’s a little secret: creativity is not about output as much as it is a way of thinking and being. I’m a disaster when it comes to drawing or painting, but I can arrange a room to make it feel welcoming or make a tasty meal out of random stuff in the fridge. I’ll bet there are things you do that demonstrate creative thinking. Take a look at the things that make you and others feel good - you’ll find clues there.

Unitarian Universalism is a creative faith. My friend Kristina calls it, “Choose Your Own Adventure.” Without a creed to guide and bind us, we have the freedom of creative expression. We borrow from other faith traditions (syncretism) and put great value on our own experiences of transcending mystery and wonder. All of this potentially dizzying freedom and creativity is guided by our values and centered in love.

So, bring your creativity and enthusiasm and we’ll help you find your area of ministry in beloved community. I can’t wait to hear your ideas!

Rev. Michelle

MAY SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 AM

5/4 "A Whale of a Tale"

john Snodgrass

How did a mythical sea-monster get into the Bible? Why did it have to be killed, and will people really eat it? We'll be looking at this strange beast and some of its ancient relatives, and what this all has to do with the struggles of modern faith.

john (lower case intentional) Snodgrass is a frequent and popular speaker at UU Amherst. An instructor in Religion at Canisius University, john is also a playwright and author of many books, the most recent being *Shakespeare’s Goddess*.

5/11 “Mother’s Day Complexities”

Sally Hamlin

There are many ways to feel and think and ponder on this day...what does it mean when we find ourselves increasingly alienated from Mother?

5/18 “I am a Temple (and other creative lies we tell ourselves)”

Katie Cosgrove

We often hear the phrase “My body is a temple” as a call to protect ourselves, to block out the bad and only let in the good. But in many spiritual traditions, temples are not fortresses. They are places of connection, mystery and transformation. Inspired by the philosophy of Alan Watts, we’ll explore what it means to be a temple that allows life to move through us and how creativity can help us stop resisting and start flowing, even with the things we would rather keep outside.

Katie Cosgrove is not only UU Amherst’s Director of Faith Development but also a grief worker and death doula. As a Certified Trauma Support Specialist, she helps people move through life’s best and worst transitions with honesty, appreciation and love.

5/25 Question Box Sunday

Rev. Michelle

Do you have questions about Unitarian Universalism and how to live into our values? Or perhaps you have questions that have arisen from reflections or conversations. Write your question on a card at the beginning of the service and we’ll have some candid conversation together. (*Questions must have a name attached.*) Remote folks can submit [by Thursday 5/22](mailto:administrator@uuamherst.org) to: administrator@uuamherst.org.

BOARD REPORT

Thanks to all the members of our congregation who attended the long-awaited Network of Religious Communities dinner on April 10th. It gave us a chance to honor both Dian Tucker and Pam Kent for their decades of service to UU Amherst. Both of them continue to contribute their time and energy to the betterment of our congregational community.

With the final adjustments made to our new chapel heating system we must, for reasons of safety, look at needed repairs to the slate roof of the old mansion. We hope this will be a simpler and much less expensive project than the chapel heating system.

It looks like Spring is finally here and we look forward to better weather as we spend more time outdoors.

Randy Kent, Board Chair



ENDOWMENT TRUST

With the recent gyrations in the financial world, one is likely uneasy about their family savings portfolio. Large fluctuations in the markets have had a rather significant impact on the overall value.

Although our Endowment Trust is not immune from such impacts, it is important to note that our investment strategy is focused on the long term, more like a cross-country freight train than a roller coaster. We are truly in it for the “long haul”.

The ET Board works closely with our financial advisor to diversify and prioritize long-term growth. Hopefully for our congregation, the country and the world things will seem less like a major “thrill ride” sooner rather than later.

Eric Groat, on behalf of the Endowment Trustees Barry Kent, Tamara Kofke, John Thompson, and Dian Tucker



Contributing Stocks & Securities

We are now able to accept stocks and securities.
If interested, contact Bruce Becker.

HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT?

Email: administrator@uuamherst.org
For Newsletter: by 10:00 am on the 16th
For Website: two weeks prior to event
For All Church listserv: daily during the week.
For Weekly Update: Fridays by 10:00 am

Administrator/Office Hours:
Tuesday through Friday—9:00 am to 2:00 pm

CONTRIBUTING TO UU AMHERST

1. The **Giving** option on the church website (uuamherst.org)
2. A NEW phone app "**GivePlus+**" for your phone
3. Texting a donation to phone # **833 987 1968**
4. Mailing a check [remember to fill in the Memo]
5. There is the traditional Sunday Plate
6. Don't forget Legacy Giving – in your will

UU AMHERST BOOK CLUB

UU Amherst Book Club will meet April 27 and May 25, then take a break for the summer months. The April book is *Nature's Best Hope* by Doug Tallamy. This is the basis for the Homegrown National Park movement, which our Green Justice Team is planning to implement.

For May 25, the meeting will take place off-site at Bestcellar Book Bar, 9560 Main Street, Clarence (across from Clarence High School at Gunville Rd) in their semi-private room. You can check out their menu ahead (no outside food allowed) <https://bestcellarbookbar.com/217-2/>. As you might gather from the name, there is a full bar as well as non-alcoholic drinks available. We'll gather at 12:30 pm to discuss the topic "Environmentalists Who Made a Difference." (Think Aldo Leopold, E.O. Wilson, Rachel Carson.) Choose any book you'd like to read, then come tell us about it.

Contact Marie Evans



BOOKS TO BUY AND BORROW

The Lending Library now has two locations in our building. The main collection (UU history, world religions, atheism, spiritual practice, and theology) is in the glass curio cabinet in the Emerson Room. The Annex (social and economic justice, environment, politics, leadership, life transitions, books written by former congregants, children's and young adult books) is in the Library/Living Room in the brown stand-alone bookshelf. Each spot has its own sign-out spiral notebook--please leave your name, the title you took, and an expected return date. Happy Reading!

Used Books for Sale are on the white built-in shelves in the Library/Living Room. Most of the fiction titles have been reviewed and are 2011 or newer. Suggested donation is 50 cents for paperbacks and \$1.00 for hardcover. There is a metal strongbox to leave cash in and QR codes posted to pay by credit card. All proceeds benefit Amherst Little Free Pantry.



Emerson Room cabinet

AMHERST LITTLE FREE PANTRY

Thank you to the Terhune family who have been doing the Aldi shopping for pantry staples like breakfast cereal. Thanks, too, to Judy Churchill and Doreen Park for picking up 150 jars of peanut butter and 58 containers of jelly from Peanut Butter and Jelly (Lockport HQ), a Facebook group who collect via food drives in Niagara County and distribute it to pantries across the area.



To give you an idea how popular PB is with our users, we were completely out of peanut butter February 16 and again April 6. In the 7 weeks between, we distributed 101 jars (49 from Lockport, 22 from private in-kind donations, and 30 purchased from Wegmans). That's more than 2 per day. Other very popular items are breakfast cereal, pasta and sauce, mac & cheese, and Chef Boyardee products.

Questions? Contact Marie Evans, Chair

CULTURAL EXPLORERS

Theater Lovers are headed to Jewish Repertory Theatre for the May 4 Sunday matinee of *The Hatmaker's Wife* at 2:00 pm, followed by dinner at Lebro's Restaurant at 4:15 pm. The show runs May 1 to 25, if you're not able to join us on the 4th. There are forms in the UU Amherst lobby (in a manila folder at the bottom of the Church Life bulletin board) for discount tickets to Thursday evening or Sunday afternoon performances (\$30 instead of the box office price of \$48). The plot synopsis:

A young woman moves in with her boyfriend expecting domestic bliss, but instead has trouble getting comfortable. Her strange new home seems determined to help out – and soon the walls are talking. They reveal the magical tale of an old hatmaker and his long-suffering wife, who runs away with his favorite hat. This sweet and surreal story bends time, space, and Yiddish folklore to redefine the idea of family, home, and true love itself. JRT and Lebro's are both located in Getzville. Contact Marie Evans for more details.

A less pricey theater option (\$21.12 - 24.46) you might explore on your own is Niagara Regional Theatre Guild's production of *Into the Woods* running May 2 through 18. It's a Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine musical fairy tale, twisting many plots and characters from the Brothers Grimm. The theater is located in Tonawanda, with plenty of free parking. NRTG is a highly talented community theater group. Their January/February show, *The Importance of Being Earnest* was reportedly a better performance than Irish Classical's. Purchase tickets at (716) 260-2319 or niagaratheatre.com/tickets.



Lunch Party

Sunday, May 4th Noon

(following service)

Emerson Room

Family friendly event featuring chili (meat and vegan) with all the trimmings!
Free will donation gratefully accepted.
Hosted by the UU Amherst Fundraising Task Group.



NRC Appreciation Dinner, April 10th, Honors Dian Tucker and Pam Kent

"Thank you to all our friends at the UUCA. Your positive support and good wishes made us both so grateful to be part of such a great group of people and made us even more determined to work hard for our church in the future."

With love and gratitude,
Dian Tucker and Pam Kent

HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

This is a reminder that if you are experiencing financial hardship, you can reach out to Rev. Michelle, minister@uamherst.org, for assistance from the Minister's Discretionary Fund. This Fund is made possible by the generosity of fellow congregants, and just one more way we demonstrate that no one is alone. We care for one another.

MAY 2025 CALENDAR

PLEASE NOTE: Some meetings are virtual-only; others are dual platform (Zoom and in-person); and some in-person only. See the notation after the meeting. Zoom links are provided by the group hosts or by request from the Office Administrator. Zoom meetings taking place in the Zadmin room are identified with the abbreviation. **Zoom, only, indicates a private account; log in must be provided by the host.**

Room abbreviations: EM (Emerson Room); LR Living Room); Bul (Bulfinch-FD Wing); EC (Ecology Center); Murray Meeting Room (MMR)

Friday, May 2nd
6:00-8:00 pm: Havurah Service Chapel/EM

Saturday, May 3rd
10:00 am: Lace Guild (rental) MMR

Sunday, May 4th
12:00 pm: Cinco de Mayo Party Lunch EM
12:00 pm: Amherst Little Free Pantry Meeting LR

Friday, May 9th
3:00 pm: Memorial Service Prep (rental) Chapel

Saturday, May 10th
11:00 am-3:00 pm Memorial Service (rental)
Chapel/EM

Sunday, May 11th
12:00 pm: Poetry as Practice LR

Saturday, May 17th
9:00 am: Firewall Meeting EM
12:00 pm: Grounds /Gardens Clean-up
7:00-9:00 pm Vocal Recital Chapel/EM

Sunday, May 18th
12:00 pm: Justice Advocacy Group LR

Tuesday, May 20th
6:30 pm: Lace Guild (rental) MMR

Wednesday, May 21st
6:00 pm: Finance Meeting MMR
7:30 pm: Board Meeting MMR

Friday, May 23rd
4:30-8:00 pm: Havurah Service Chapel/EM

Sunday, May 25th
12:00 pm: UU Amherst Book Group LR

RECURRING:

**UU Universe-ity Sunrise Sessions continue
M-F 8:30 am on Zadmin**

All "tree" names are for Village groups

Saturdays, May 3rd-31st
9:30 am: Sharing Circle Zadmin
7:00 pm: Birch Bunch Zadmin

Sundays, May 4th-25th
9:30 am: Church of the Wild
10:30 am: Sunday service—in-person and livestream;
coffee hour following

Mondays, May 5th-26th
7:00 pm: Tulip Crabapples Zadmin (weekly)
5/12 & 5/26 (2nd & 4th Mon)
7:30 pm: Marvelous Maples Zoom

Tuesdays, May 6th-27th
12:30 pm: Women's Group Lunch EM (5/6)
Women's Group Zadmin (5/13, 5/20,
5/27

5/13 (2nd Tue)
7:00 pm: Marlana's Covenant Group LR

Wednesdays, May 7th-28th
5/21st (3rd Wed)
1:30 pm: 3rd Wednesday Covenant Group Zoom
7:00 pm: Bofinger Covenant Group Zoom
7:00 pm: Northtowns Village Zoom

Thursdays, May 8th-31st
10:00 am: Current Events Zadmin

Reminder: Groups, please restore rooms before leaving. Return chairs to their places and take any papers (etc) with you or dispose of them properly.

Kitchen Storage: All opened packages must be enclosed in plastic containers or Ziplock bags before placing in cupboards.

Kitchen Etiquette: To all groups and individuals that meet at church outside regular Sunday morning hours: Please tidy up and wash any dishes/cups you may have used. We need to keep our kitchen tidy and ready for use. Thanks for your help with this.



Church of the Wild Returns

Join us at 9:30 am in the Debbie Waterhouse Ecology Center. Bring a chair, a poem, your wonder of nature. Gather for a brief period of sharing, then go walk the trails

or labyrinths or meditate quietly in an area of your choosing. Return for a few moments of shared experiences before moving on with your day whether it's the morning service or whatever else that calls you. Lauraine Marcus will meet you at the edge of the Ecology Center at 9:25 am, near the basketball court at the back of the parking lot. Church of the Wild is an all weather event (except a torrential downpour).

Tuesday Women's Group

This month our in-person meeting will be Tuesday, May 6th We will meet in the Emerson Room at 12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and a beverage. Other meeting dates via Zoom are: May 13th, 20th, and 27th. Zoom link provided by host Marge Marcille or Office administrator.



Current Events Zoom

The Current Events Zoom takes place the third Thursday of each month. This month's meeting will be on May 15th at 10:00 am on Zoom. Link provided by host Peggy Cook or request from the Office Administrator.



Grounds & Garden Clean-up

Saturday, May 24th
10:00 am-4:00 pm

MINISTRY & MORE

Music at UU Amherst

Choir Call-Out & Rehearsals

If you are a singer in search of a song, join the choir! Questions? Contact Linda Delorey.

Instrumentalists Wanted

Do you play an instrument? Would you like to be part of a pick-up ensemble or even a soloist? Great! Contact Rev. Michelle (minister@uuamherst.org).

Tech Help Needed!

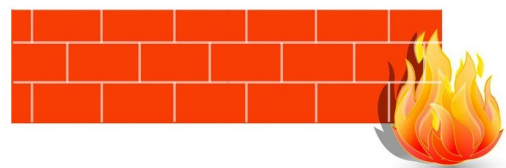
Are you someone for whom computers and technology are, if not easy-peasy, at least understandable? Have you been wondering how you can be part of the magic that is the wider (online) community of UU Amherst? Yay! This notice is for you!

Needed: Technical Assistant(s) to work with Les in the loft as we live stream and record our services on Sunday mornings. You still get to experience the service - just from an elevated point of view!

Respond to minister@uuamherst.org if you are interested.

Firewall Meeting

Saturday, May 17th @ 9:00 am
Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst



Firewall is an umbrella organization of community activists. We bring together like minded individuals and groups to Educate & Advocate for common issues.

Firewall is a Political Action Group that is not affiliated with the UU Church of Amherst.

Private, gender-neutral restrooms are available in the Administration Wing (through the doors in the main lobby) and on the second level of the house portion of our building. If you're offering a tour to a newcomer, be sure to mention that we have these accommodations.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Yearbook Photos Pop-Up!

Get ready for your glamour shots! In all seriousness, we'll be setting up a photo set during coffee hour on few Sundays in the next couple of months to take fun and serious portraits of our community. Silly portraits will be used in a UU Amherst yearbook and serious portraits will be for a new digital directory! Dates will be announced in the weekly update so stay tuned.



Pride Parade

Buffalo's Pride Parade is Sunday, June 1st, and UU Amherst will be showing up to march in support and solidarity! We'll publish more details (time, location to meet, ways to help, etc.) in the coming weeks. If you have any questions in the meantime please reach out to Katie Cosgrove, dfd@uuamherst.org.

Middle & High School FD Program

Exciting news for our middle and high school youth! We're starting to offer a program just for you with activities and discussions that will be more engaging. We'll be diving into the Coming of Age journey at your own pace, with space to explore big ideas, share stories and have some fun along the way.

In community,
Katie Cosgrove she/her
Director of Faith Development



Vocal Recital—a year later Saturday, May 17th, 7:00 pm Rev. Michelle with Alfred Frenning

This recital was originally scheduled for last spring, but I lost my voice. Little did I know that a case of laryngitis would turn into a 9-month saga of trying to regain my primary instrument and way of connecting in the world. Come and hear some of the music that moves me. It's an eclectic mixture of art songs, opera, Broadway, jazz, and... It's my gift to you. Invite your friends! Enjoy the amazing acoustics for voice in our chapel.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & NOMINATING COMMITTEE (LD&NC)

The Leadership Development and Nominating Committee held its “Board and Leadership Development Leader Lab” on Saturday, April 12, 2025 in the Emerson Room.

The objectives discussed during this session included: identifying the needs of our current and future leaders to increase their effectiveness; and brainstorming on who within our UU Amherst community, or outside contacts, might help in delivering training for the designated issues.

This lab was well attended and fostered great ideas and collaboration among the participants (and delicious breakfast pizza!).

Julie Marquis on behalf of Committee members: Suzanne Christ (Chair), Ellen Moomaw, and Jacqueline Babka, Ruth Bowen, Board Liaison

GREEN JUSTICE

The Green Justice Team held its first meeting since the Living Green Festival on April 22nd, to assess who is interested in participating, what is being done, and what needs planning.) Following is a brief report.

The one seasonal topic that needs explaining right now is the compost service provided by Farmer Pirates which maintains a collection bin in the parking lot to the left of the handicapped parking area. This service is by subscription only. When the weather is above freezing, a combination lock is put on the bin. For a \$10 monthly fee, a lock code is provided to access the bin for adding scraps. The church kitchen does this with the Sunday scraps only. The status of UU Amherst is that of a site host, a Neighborhood Drop Off Spot. Farmer Pirates runs the service, collects membership fees, and distributes the compost in the spring. For more information, see their website, farmerpirates.com.

For Town of Amherst residents, they can compost for free at the Town Highway Department on North Forest, so Farmer Pirates would probably appeal more to residents of other towns/cities. If anyone is interested in buying compost without signing up as a member, it is available for pre-order and pick up now through June 14. For more information, see their website at farmerpirates.com.

Wendy Scott



CENTRAL EAST REGION SUMMER INSTITUTE 2025: JULY 6TH - 12TH

“LIVE A LIFE ON FIRE: CHANGE THE WORLD WITH YOUR LOVE”

SUMMER INSTITUTE – A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ALL-AGES CAMP

Get ready for an unforgettable week of community, music and learning! Summer Institute 2025 is returning to Oberlin College, OH. Be part of a vibrant community dedicated to personal growth, social justice, and spiritual exploration. Connect with like-minded individuals to:

- Explore new ideas and perspectives
- Enjoy inspiring music and arts
- Be inspired by Rev. Joanna Fontaine Crawford’s message

See Rev Michelle, Les, Linda Joy, and/or Kim Diana for information and encouragement to attend. It’s fun for all ages!

Grand Opening!

UU Amherst Merch Store Now Open

Thanks to all who have purchased sweatshirts and T-shirts with our UU Amherst rainbow logo! 100% of profit directly benefits UU Amherst programming. Now you can order your own online, with additional colors and sizes available.

Print Your Cause UU Amherst Merch Online Store

<https://shop.printyourcause.com/campaigns/uu-amherst-store>

The clothing items below are still available for purchase on Sundays; See Linda Joy during Coffee Hour or send her an email to uuamherstconnections@gmail.com.

- 1 Black Sweatshirt Adult M \$35
- 2 Lt Gray Short Sleeve T-shirts Youth Small \$16
- 2 Royal Blue Short Sleeve T-Shirts Adult Small \$18

Also, Les Buhite made some Bluebird houses, available for a donation of your choosing.



CONNECTIONS

Help Us Care for One Another

The Caring for One Another Team, now part of Connections, is central to our community's commitment to compassion. When members of our community experience difficulty, illness or loss we reach out to support them.

Can you help us provide support through meals, rides, visits and/or calls for those in need? Contact Linda Joy Groat, uuamherstconnections@gmail.com, or Laurie Kasnicki to learn more!

CLOTHING MINISTRY

The Clothing Ministry Team has put away cold weather clothing and accessories and are stocking spring items in our room and pantry. We also did a deep cleaning of the clothing room. We invite anyone who wants to shop the room to stop by on the second floor of the FD space. It is always open and you are welcome to peruse our selection. Donations always accepted in the donation bins outside the room and in the lobby closet. Let us know if you would like to be more involved.

Clothing Ministry Team, Dian and Don Tucker, Pam and Jerry Kent, Barry Kent and Barbara Kent Gauger

Coordination of Caretaker Duties—May

- Sunday, May 4 – Saturday, May 10 - Bruce Becker
- Sunday, May 11 – Saturday, May 17 - Barry Kent
- Sunday, May 18 – Saturday, May 24 - Bob Johnson
- Sunday, May 25 – Saturday, May 31 - Randy Kent

CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER RECIPES Provided by Christine Boczarska and Faith Pham

Christine Boczarska and Faith Pham are sisters and dedicated members of our Caring For One Another group. They provide occasional meals to UU Amherst members on an as-needed basis. With the meal they generally include a “goodie bag” and a card on behalf of the Caring Group. Each month you’ll find one of their healthy recipes here in *The Foreword* often incorporating fresh vegetables and even gluten-free.

This is not a recipe as such but some notes on cooking.

Chicken is a favorite for many people. When you are cooking a whole chicken, to get crispy skin, roast the bird at 400 degrees F for 20 minutes and then lower the temperature to 350 degrees F to finish the bake.

As with any meat, seasoning is essential to get a tasty result. A simple rub, inside and out with Bells or any poultry seasoning works well. Or, simply rub on salt, pepper and a cut lemon. You can then place the lemon inside the bird and even add your choice of spice to roast the chicken. Even if you stuff the bird and bake it, seasoning it beforehand is needed for the best flavor. As we age we lose some of our sense of taste so this ensures that the food does not lack flavor.



Cranberry sauce is a great accompaniment to chicken as well as other fowl and meats, but if you don’t have it on hand, rhubarb also works well. It is cooked just like fresh cranberries- 2 to 3 cups of raw rhubarb, 1/2 cup of sugar and 1/2 cup of water cooked in a pot on low heat until it is completely soft produces a sweet/tart sauce to accompany your meat. Lemon curd also works well with meats. If commercial lemon curd is too sweet for you just add some lemon juice to it.

Cooking a steak had been a challenge for me until I read James Beard’s method. Using a heavy skillet, ridged if possible, heat until red hot. Then lightly sprinkle on some salt and add your well trimmed steak. Trimming is needed to prevent smoking when you cook the meat. With the heat still on high, sear the steak for about 2 to 3 minutes on each side, then turn the heat down to medium and cook to your desired doneness. Seven minutes per side results in a medium cooked steak.

Hope these tips help.
Christine

UU Digital Security—New Practices

As we first presented in the April *Weekly Update*, UU Amherst has initiated several steps to protect leaders, staff, and members from potential email phishing attacks and other mis-uses of our digital communications including Zoom based on recommendations from UUA Digital Security. These measures are in discussion so changes may occur (for improvement!), but currently the following actions have been taken:

- No private email addresses will be published in UU Amherst communications.
- Anyone who needs a members’ contact information can access the online directory. [This link is not published.](#) but can be provided upon request to the Office Administrator. Printed copies are also available upon request.
- A new PDF document and spreadsheet have been created with **Zoom log-in credentials for groups using the UU Amherst rooms (clickable)**, For meetings using personal Zoom accounts, the hosts’ names and contacts are provided. The PDF and link to the spreadsheet were sent to members through an All Church email; both are available upon request. These documents replace publishing the links in the *Weekly Update*.



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