

Issue

OCTOBER 2025

The Foreword

The Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst
6320 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221
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Office Hours Tues.—Fri. 9am to 2pm www.uuamherst.org



UU AMHERST

*Fostering Justice
and Compassion*

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Focus on Faith Development

It is truly a "UU Miracle." In eighteen months we have gone from zero faith development staff and zero children to a half-time Director of Faith Development (DFD), 2 part-time FD support staff (Molly & Kyla), a cadre of dedicated "extra pair of hands" volunteers, and 24 children and youth registered in the program! And we are still growing! Can someone give me a "Hallelujah!?! *"



A shady spot in the playground

When you support UU Amherst with your time, talent, and \$treasure\$, you are keeping us "green and growing" (thanks for the verbiage, Dian Tucker!). Currently our two FD support staff are paid through generous grants from the Riefler Foundation and the NYS Convention of Universalists; and we are grateful for the seed money that has made it possible for our program to take root and grow. And if you are familiar with grants, then you know that they are time-limited; and time is running out.

If you are half as excited as we are with the green and growing Faith Development program, you're likely thinking about dedicating all of your financial support to this ministry. However, it doesn't work that way. There is no designated 'bucket' for Faith Development in our budget. Church doesn't work that way. It was JFK who popularized the adage that "A rising tide lifts all boats" - and frankly, that's how a faith community works. We give to the church/congregation as a whole and entrust our leadership to distribute the funds faithfully.

Our Faith Development program is so vital because we have the vital staff to make it happen. We hope you will give generously to the 2026 pledge campaign and keep UU Amherst green and growing (and a little bit rowdy). Thank you in advance!

** Many sincere thanks to Linda Joy Groat who kept things afloat for the 18 months before our DFD Katie appeared! (And Linda Joy helped to 'discover' Katie!)*

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.*

OCTOBER SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 AM

10/5 In a Pig's Eye

john Snodgrass

Why does the pig get such a bad reputation in religion? And how did this un-Kosher creature become the centerpiece of some Christian festivals?

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*.

10/12 Adventures in Health: What's in Your Head?

Julie Marquis, Brianna Migliore, Charlie d'Estries

Dr. Brianna Migliore, Neuroscientist and Author, will be presenting "The Science of Overwhelm."

10/19 How UU Promises of Covenant Must Be Fulfilled by Human Deeds (and with Grace)

Kim Diana Connolly

In our Unitarian Universalist faith, covenant is at the heart of who we are—binding us not by doctrine, but by how we choose to walk with one another in love and justice. This Sunday we'll explore how covenant is not an abstract ideal, but a living reality expressed in the daily choices of our hands, hearts, and deeds. Along the way, we will reflect on the essential role of grace—both in extending it to others and in receiving it ourselves—as we strive to live into and build upon our promises together.

10/26 How About Some Good Old Fashioned Ancestor Worship?

Rev. Michelle

Rev. Michelle will be away from church 10/2-13 (on pilgrimage - sermon forthcoming) and 10/20-22 (UU business).

Hello Friends,

You won't be seeing much of me in the pulpit this month. The first 2 weeks, I'll be in France on a spiritual retreat and pilgrimage as I follow in the footsteps of Mary Magdalene. This is the trip of a lifetime, and although it freaks me out a little bit to travel by myself (and meet up with a group), I've been busily learning some French phrases. I can adequately request wine, bread, and olives - and of course, creme brulee!

All of this means that you have the opportunity to hear from other folks this month - which is important. I am not the voice of UU Amherst, although sometimes it looks (and sounds) that way. This is your congregation. We work together to foster more compassion and justice in the world! So, that means that there might be quizzes for the weeks I'm away. If I were you, I wouldn't take any chances... Come on Sunday mornings and bring your generous hearts and curiosity to take in what others have to share with you.

With hope,
Rev. Michelle



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

BOARD REPORT

September saw the completion of the playground safety renovation project. The playground was reopened on Sunday, September 14th and some of our children were using it that day after service. On behalf of the BOT I would like to add our thanks to all the folks that Katie Cosgrove mentioned in the Weekly Update as well as Katie herself who was an integral part of this successful project. As for the BOT, we were glad to play our part and find the money needed to complete the project.

Speaking of projects and funding this fall, the BOT intends to have a roof remediation project completed on the old mansion. This is not a replacement of that century old building's roof but is designed to stop leaks, prevent leaks, and keep the remaining shingles in place. This will give the congregation the time needed to consider the future of that building and come to a decision.

As for funding, we hope to utilize funds on hand to pay for the project. This makes our "Funding the Future" annual pledge drive very important as we need to obtain the funds to improve and maintain the programs like Faith Development that have brought in so many new members while ensuring that our facilities are also maintained and repaired when needed.

Last month I mentioned the approximately \$15,000 in grants we received, which came from the NYS Convention of Universalists. Two thirds of that money went into our Faith Development Program and is being used to fund the young women that have worked with Katie to make FD such a success. As the grants are for one year only, we hope that your generous pledges will provide the money needed to keep them with us in 2026.

—Randy Kent, Board Chair



ENDOWMENT TRUST

Full Endowment Trust meetings are scheduled quarterly. The next meeting is Tuesday, October 21 at 6:00 pm in the Emerson Room. UU Amherst members are welcome to attend. Please contact me or another trustee in advance if you have a specific topic/question.

The Trustees ask you to keep this wise maxim in mind:

We pick fruit from trees we did not plant.

We drink water from wells we did not dig.

This is as it should be, so long as we dig and plant for those who will come after us.

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

Coordination of Caretaker Duties — October

Wednesday, September 24 - Saturday, October 4 - Barry Kent

Sunday, October 5 - Saturday, October 11 - Dian & Don Tucker

Sunday, October 12 - Saturday, October 18 - Randy Kent

Sunday, October 19 - Saturday, October 25 - Bob Johnson

Sunday, October 26 - Saturday, November 1 - Bruce Becker

COVENANT CORNER

During a sermon on covenant this past July 13th,* I shared that UU Amherst will be renewing our congregational covenant over the coming year. We have an exciting journey ahead as we discern what we want our ongoing promises to our community to include. We'll move gently and thoughtfully through the process together. [More to come on how you can be part of the process as we get deeper into autumn!]

To help us reflect along the way, I'll be curating this new column called Covenant Corner. To begin, let's remind ourselves what it means to be a covenantal faith. In our UU faith, the word "covenant" is both a noun and a verb. It describes a written agreement among members promising how we aspire to be together — and it also describes the active practice of engaging in mutual promises with one another, with the Holy, and with the wider world. Our current covenant expresses the loving, respectful, and supportive relationships we strive to nurture here in this community. We will be revisiting this with our 2025 congregation, and in light of our newly amended values in the UUA national by-laws.

Other churches are engaging in this type of collective discernment too! Our beloved friends at the UU Church of Buffalo recently renewed their own covenant, reminding us that renewing our promises is part of the living tradition we share.

Stay tuned for future installments of Covenant Corner as we reflect, imagine, and shape our shared path forward — together.

*Available on the UU Amherst YouTube channel

—Kim Diana Connolly

UU AMHERST BOOK GROUP

The October meeting is Sunday, October 26th. We won't choose the topic or book until the September 28th meeting.

—Marie Evans



CULTURAL EXPLORERS

Congratulations to longtime member, Anne Gayley! She was honored by the Buffalo theater community on Monday, September 15th, to kick off Curtain Up! week. They unveiled her name on the Plaza of Stars at Main and Tupper Streets downtown.



GREEN JUSTICE

Are we all as green as we'd like to be? Could we learn easy ways to improve? How green is the UUA? Does the 7th Principle make sense as a guide to action?

"Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

I am here to tell you about the Green Justice Team, which was reconstituted last spring after six months off. The fifteen or so members carry out projects that improve the environmental impact of church practices and encourage its members to do the same. Over the years, solar panels have been installed on the roof for church use, fluorescent light bulbs have been replaced and motion-activated light switches put in place, recycled paper products substituted, composting and recycling started, and more. All constructions are done to current environmental standards, for example the new chapel boiler last winter. Recycling is done in several ways: kitchen scraps, paper and plastics, gently used clothing, etc.

The Living Green Festival, which has been held the last three years in September, has been shelved indefinitely while we reconsider its focus. Instead, the Team is studying the Homegrown National Park movement, which aims to return native flora and fauna to as much of the land as possible (homegrown national park.org). This was started three years ago by Professor Douglas Tallamy of the University of Delaware, who invites everyone to:

"Join us and plant native to rebuild the ecosystems that support all life, and restore the vital connections between plants and animals for a healthier, thriving planet."

Very briefly, the steps are plant native, remove invasives, get on the U.S. map of nativized areas. This will be brought to the congregation over the fall and winter, providing information and ideas for participating at home and at church, where there are 11+ acres of land to inspire us. Projects range from the tiny – plant a native in a pot in your yard – to the large and ongoing – remove invasives from church property.

Interested? Talk to Green Justice Team members wearing ID badges after church on Sundays. Get on the mailing list if you'd like to come to a meeting or receive minutes, and thanks for being interested!

–Wendy Scott, Green Justice Team



AMHERST LITTLE FREE PANTRY

Snowbirds! Remember our pantry as you clean out yours and pack to head to warmer climes! We greatly appreciate donations of shelf-stable foods (even if they're a little past the "expiration" date). No glass, please!

You might also want to browse the Used Book shelves for a beach read or two - all sales benefit ALFP.

–Marie Evans Evans.marie@gmail.com, 716-636-5770

CLOTHING MINISTRY

The seasonal changeover is complete. You will find fall clothing on the rack and in the room. Visit us at your leisure and shop.

–Barbara Gauger Kent

OCTOBER 2025 CALENDAR

PLEASE NOTE: Some meetings are virtual-only) 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.

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

Wednesday, October 1st

7:45 am: John Newman Mission (rental) MMR **weekly**

1:00 pm: Historical Jesus Series EM **weekly**

7:00 pm: Havurah Service CH/EM

Thursday, October 2nd

10:00 am: Havurah CH/EM

3:30 pm: Havurah CH/EM

Saturday, October 4th

10:00 am: Lace Guild MMR (rental)

Sunday, October 5th

12:00 pm: Amherst Little Free Pantry LR

Tuesday, October 7th

10:30 am: Leadership Dev & Nominating Com EM

12:30 pm: Women's Group Lunch EM

5:00 pm: Simple Family Series FD/MMR **weekly**

Wednesday, October 8th

1:00 pm: Historical Jesus Series EM

Thursday, October 9th

4:00 pm: WNY Pride Event EM

6:00 pm: Holistic Balance retreat (rental) BUL

Wednesday, October 15th

1:00 pm: Historical Jesus Series EM

6:00 pm: Finance Meeting MMR

7:30 pm: Board Meeting MMR

Saturday, October 18th

9:00 am: Firewall CH/EM

1:00 pm: Rainbow Café MMR

4:00 pm: Hinni Martens Memorial Service

Sunday, October 19th

12:00 pm: Worship Associate Gathering CH

Tuesday, October 21st

6:00 pm: Endowment Trust Meeting EM

6:30 pm: Lace Guild MMR (rental) MMR

Sunday, October 26th

12:00 pm: UU Amherst Book Group LR

RECURRING: SUNDAYS

Sundays, October 5th-26th

9:30 am: Church of the Wild

10:30 am: Sunday service—in-person and livestream; coffee hour following

RECURRING MEETINGS:

UU Universe-ity Sunrise Sessions

M-F 8:30 am on Zadmin

All "tree" names are for Village groups

Saturdays, October 4th-25th

9:30 am: Sharing Circle Zadmin

7:00 pm: Birch Bunch Zadmin

Mondays, October 6th-27th

7:00 pm: Tulip Crabapples Zadmin (weekly)

Tuesdays, October 7th-28th

12:30 pm: Women's Group Lunch EM (10/7)

Women's Group Zadmin (10/14,
10/21, 10/28)

10/14 (2nd Tue)

7:00 pm: Marlana's Covenant Group LR

Wednesdays, October 1st-29th

10/15 (3rd Wed)

1:30 pm: 3rd Wed Covenant Group Zoom

7:00 pm: Bofinger Covenant Group Zoom

7:00 pm: Northtowns Village Zoom

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

Join us each Sunday at 9:30 am in the Debbie Waterhouse Ecology Center. Bring a chair, a poem, your wonder of nature. 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, October 7th. We will meet in the Emerson Room at 12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and a beverage. Other meeting dates via Zoom are: October 14th, 21st, and 28th, Zoom link provided by host Marge Marcille or Office Administrator.

Universal Restrooms

We are waiting for the asbestos abatement to occur and have enough grant funds to make that happen. Donations are needed to transform our 1970’s child oriented restrooms into gender neutral adult facilities. The former girls restroom will also be accessible. Please be generous in your monetary donations.

NOTE: Before asbestos removal begins, these restrooms are available for use.

Ministry Train

What on earth is a “Ministry Train”???

Great question! Thanks for asking!

Close your eyes and imagine a train. There are cars with all kinds of different functions. Sometimes various cars move to the side while the rest of the train pulls away from the station - ready to bring important things out into the world. The same goes for a Ministry Train.

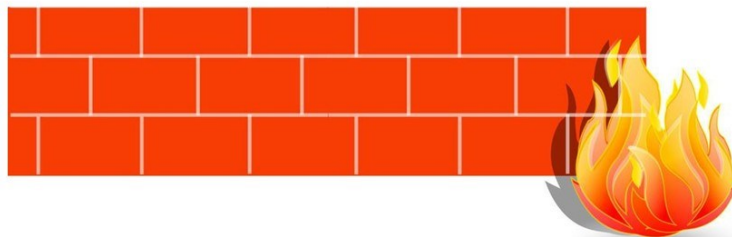
The various ministry teams make up the Ministry Train. Sometimes all of the cars are active and sometimes only a few. But it’s still a train, and it still has goodness to bring out into the world.

The next Ministry Train leaves the station (woot, woot) on Saturday, November 8th, 9:30 am-Noon. Anyone is welcome to come and listen and participate. Ministry Team ‘leads’ are encouraged to attend, as this is the time when ideas for activities and programs are brought before the group for discernment and possible implementation. We have good conversation while we build connections among those who are helping UU Amherst to fulfill our mission of challenging ourselves and the community to foster more justice and compassion in the world. It’s a big task and coming together helps us to decide where to put our energies.

Firewall Meeting

Saturday October 18th@ 9:00 am

Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst



Firewall is a coalition of Concerned Citizens who support Democracy and the Rule of Law.

Immediately following is a “NO KINGS” Protest at the Amherst Town Hall

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

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Katie Cosgrove, Director



This Month's Blessing

In an effort to save newsletter space this month, I offer a short blessing, inspired by the words of one of Buffalo's greatest:

Be good. Do good. Spread light. Go bills.

Out of Office Dates

Please note I will be out of town Nov. 5th-Nov. 13th, where I'll be attending the LREDA Fall Conference.

Introducing: The Beatrix Potter Room

Rev. Michelle and I have refreshed the infant room (next to the Atrium) into a welcoming, versatile space for all! Parents and caregivers can still use it as a kid-friendly grounding space and other congregants are welcome to use it for a more intimate or inclusive meeting space. When reserving, please refer to it as the *Potter Room*—new signage coming soon!

Next time you're at UU Amherst, stop by the Potter Room, read a story or simply take a quiet moment. It's a beautiful space.



Slow Retreat

It's already October and I don't know about you, but I'm tired. Fulfilled? Absolutely. Grateful? Always. But still... tired. I sense this is something many in our congregation and community are feeling too.

So instead of pushing harder to get through the season—or wishing time would slow down—what if we chose to pause? To slow with intention.

Rev. Michelle and I are hosting a *Slow Retreat* for exactly this purpose. Join us on November 22nd from 10:00 am-2:00 pm to rest, breathe and simply be. Wear your comfy clothes (pajamas are welcome) and bring your favorite blanket. We'll create cozy spaces with light structure, time for meditation, nourishing food, quiet and togetherness. It's a chance to land gently, in community, in the midst of the chaos outside.

RSVP by November 17th to Katie by email: dfd@uuamherst.org.

HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

This is a reminder that if you are experiencing financial hardship, you can reach out to Rev. Michelle, minister@uuamherst.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.

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 Team. 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 a hearty fall dish loaded with flavor and even better the next day. Enjoy!

Cuban Black Beans

New York Times Magazine 3/2010, from Tastes Like Cuba by Eduardo Machado and Michael Domitrovich

- 1 1/2 green peppers, stemmed and seeded
- 10 garlic cloves, or as many as you can tolerate
- 1 pound dried black beans, rinsed and picked over
- 1 smoked ham hock or 1/2 pound ham steak, cut into chunks
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 tsp salt, to taste
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 4 slices thick bacon, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
- 1 Spanish onion, diced
- 1 jalapeño, stemmed and finely chopped
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 3 Tbsp distilled white vinegar
- 1 Tbsp turbinado or other brown sugar



Cut green pepper in 1 inch squares. Smash and peel 4 garlic cloves. Put the green pepper and garlic into a large pot with the beans, ham hock, bay leaves and 1 Tbsp salt. Add 2 quarts water and bring to a boil. Cover pot and simmer until the beans are tender, an hour or more.

Meanwhile, make a sofrito: Cut the remaining 1/2 green pepper into 1/4 inch dice. Peel and finely chop the remaining garlic. Heat the olive oil in a very large skillet over medium high heat. Add the bacon and cook, stirring occasionally, until it starts to brown, about 5 minutes. Add the green pepper and onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly softened, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic, jalapeño (leave out the seeds if you don’t want it too spicy), oregano, cumin, black pepper and 2 tsp salt and stir for another minute. Pour in the vinegar and scrape any browned bits from the bottom of pan with a wooden spoon. This is sofrito.

When the beans are cooked, discard the bay leaves. Remove and set aside the ham hock and let it cool, Transfer 1 cup of beans to a small bowl, mash them into a paste with a fork and return to the pot. Add the sofrito, then the sugar. Pull the meat from the ham hock. Chop into 1/2 inch pieces and return it to the bean pot.

Stir the beans well and bring to a boil over medium heat, then lower to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for 20 minutes or so, skimming any foam from the top. Taste for salt and serve with white rice. Serves 8 to 10.

**New 2UU Orientation
Coming November 1st
Details forthcoming!**

CONNECTIONS

Help Us Help You—Share Your Emergency Contact Information

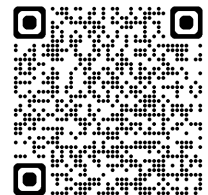
Your well-being is important to us, and having emergency contact details on file ensures we can provide swift assistance in urgent medical situations. We encourage all members of our congregation to consider submitting emergency contact information—while optional, it can be invaluable in times of need.

You can easily share your information by clicking this link <https://forms.gle/HhWFvgkTP6FwHJeU9>, typing it in your browser, or scanning the QR code, below, with your phone's camera app. Paper forms are also available at the Welcome Center, if preferred. Rest assured, your details will be kept strictly confidential. Contact Linda Joy Groat, uuamherstconnections@gmail.com or Laurie Kasnicki to learn more.



Looking for Caring Team Helpers

The Caring Team is looking for helpers to support new people, reach out to those who are homebound, and engage in other simple ways of support. You can easily share your information by using this URL: <https://forms.gle/N5E8X3cAdKBP3ZTKA> or scanning the QR code on the right with your phone's camera app. Paper forms are also available at the Welcome Center, if preferred.



UU AMHERST ONLINE STORE

shop.printyourcause.com/campaigns/uu-amherst-store



U.U.—U.N.NEWS

4 September 2025

2025 United Nations Day Message

24 October is United Nations Day; that is because the United Nations Charter was adopted on that day in 1945 in San Francisco, California. United Nations Headquarters in New York City was not finished until 1952. 2025 is the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, America's thirty-second President, is considered to be the "father of the United Nations." Every year, U.N. Day is celebrated at U.N. Headquarters in New York City and throughout the world. The United States of America should also participate in the celebration by dismantling its global empire and global military machine and by thoroughly making the United Nations the focal point of our foreign policies.

What are the purposes of the United Nations? The main purposes are to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, to recognize the dignity and worth of the human person, to acknowledge the equal rights of men and women and nations large and small, to encourage respect for international law, to promote better standards of life in larger freedom, and to maintain international peace and security.

The United Nations is a noble, humanitarian experiment. Despite all the criticism of the organization, the United Nations has been a relative success. It has prevented another world war, promoted social progress and is in the process of realizing its purposes, principles and reforming itself.

Why is the actual United Nations so different from the U.N. Charter itself? This is a difficult question to answer. Almost all 193 United Nations Member States do not want to subordinate their sovereignty to the United Nations. Consequently, the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council do not want to elect a first-rate U.N. Secretary-General committed to realizing and strengthening the United Nations Charter. Also, the U.N. is a complex bureaucracy and its international civil service and peacekeepers have many inadequacies. There are also many other problems and dilemmas hampering the United Nations.

All this must change. To realize the U.N. Charter, the United Nations must possess the power to eliminate the scourge of war and promote human rights. To accomplish this, the United Nations must create its own effective system of collective security and a better means for promoting human rights. At the present time, universal and complete disarmament and world peace under U.N. auspices are, unfortunately, unfulfilled dreams.

Nevertheless, on United Nations Day, 24 October, all 193 United Nations Member States and all people should resolve to translate the United Nations Charter into reality in our troubled, interdependent world. The future of humanity depends on an effective United Nations and its ability to maintain international peace and security. The time to make this happen is now; otherwise, the future of humanity is bleak, indeed. As H. G. Wells wrote in *The Outline of History*, "human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." The problems facing humanity are grave, but human reason and ingenuity can solve them. The United Nations must be made to work and for this to happen, the United States of America must support it. There is no good reason why the history of the future cannot be brighter than the history of the past unless human stupidity and irrationality prevail.

David Slive, U.N. Envoy



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Fostering Justice and Compassion

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