

Issue

SEPTEMBER 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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Hello Friends,

Well, just-like-that, it's the beginning of a new program year.

Here at UU Amherst, we aren't ones to enter into anything slowly, so hang on to your hat as you read this issue of *The Foreword*. You might want to have your personal calendar at hand, as well.

The beginning of the new program year is an invitation to move with intention to the areas and activities that your soul calls you to engage in. W-a-a-a-ay back in 2017, this congregation created a strategic plan - a way to move with purpose into the future. What I found most useful in the discernment process was a little thing called a Marketing Funnel. It was eye-opening to me to consider that although we might have many people come and check us out (that's the wide part of the funnel at the top), a smaller number will return, with even a smaller number participating, and a very small number who might move into areas of leadership.

At the time, I found that completely disheartening. The perfectionist-people-pleaser in me wanted every single person who came through our doors or saw us online to realize they had reached the Promised Land, and immediately put down roots here. What can I say? I was still a baby minister with stars in her eyes.

The truth is, we're not everybody's 'cup of tea'. (I know, it's shocking to me, too.) But that doesn't mean that we stop inviting people to discover the unique pathway to Unitarian Universalism that is UU Amherst. In a service in mid-August, I asked people in the room how long they had been attending - and the vast majority were in the 5 years and under category. Wow!

No matter how long you've been attending UU Amherst (in person or virtually), I invite you to consider where you are in the "Marketing Funnel." Are you finding friends and fulfillment where you are? Are you ready to go deeper? You know where to find me if you'd like to chat!

With hope,
Rev. Michelle

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.*



SEPTEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 AM

9/7 Ingathering: Water Communion Rev. Michelle

It's the beginning of a new academic year, which means it's the beginning of our program year as well. Join us as we celebrate the Beloved Community and the many ways we are connected.

Bring water from summer adventures (from afar or from your kitchen), or pour from the collective vessels, as we mingle our waters and launch a new beginning.

9/14 Belief, Belonging, & Behavior Rev. Michelle

9/21 Loneliness Rev. Bobby LaVallee

Loneliness - It's obvious that we need other people to thrive and even survive. So why are so many of us lonely?

Rev. Bobby LaVallee recently returned to the city where he was born and raised after six years serving a congregation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Talk about a change of scenery! He is now a Spiritual Care Counselor for Hospice and Palliative Care of Buffalo

9/28 All Flourishing is Mutual Rev. Michelle

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

Lecture & Discussion Series: The Historical Jesus

Professor Bart D. Ehrman (The Great Courses)

Wednesday afternoons, 1:00-2:45 pm, September 10 thru November 26

(We need at least six people to make this 'go'.)

In these days when people's personal views of the man called Jesus are wildly divergent, perhaps it is time to explore the historical record and come to our own conclusions regarding the man, his times, and his ministry.

Sign up at the Welcome Desk or send an email to minister@uuamherst.org. Sorry, childcare not available.

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

We have much to look forward to as September arrives at UU Amherst. It brings long time members back from their summer travels and more new families with children into our community. I'm happy to say that the BOT's decision to invest in Faith Development, Reverend Michelle's finding Katie Cosgrove, and Katie's enormous efforts have made the positive difference to our congregation that we hoped for. It was not easy for the BOT to make the decision to invest in Faith Development since, at the same time, we had to also put our financial resources into repairing and replacing our long-neglected facilities including a major effort to replace the boiler that heats the chapel. That investment in FD, however, has had a major impact.



After service on Sunday, September 28th in the Emerson Room, we will kick-off this year's Generosity Drive where we ask everyone to make a pledge of financial support so we can fund our staff, programs like Faith Development, utilities, and our facilities. The paid pledges of our community cover most of the cost of UU Amherst, but not all.

We are fortunate to have an Endowment Trust that, due to the foresight of those who set it up prior to 2000, now contributes to our operating budget on an annual basis. While we hope to receive the same level of support from the Endowment Trust in 2026, their investments depend on the health of our nation's economy.

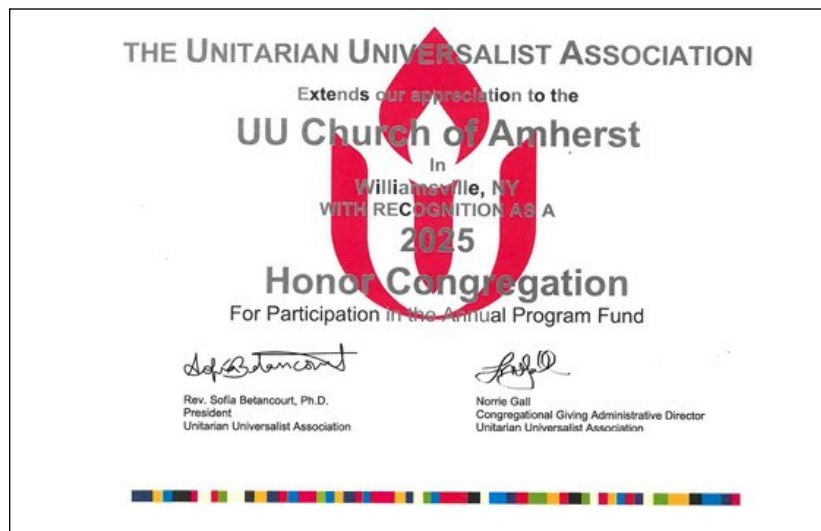
Our annual budget also supports the Program Fund of Unitarian Universalist Association headquartered in Boston, as do the budgets of the other 1,001 UU communities across our nation. In these difficult times we need to continue our support for the UUA so they can continue their work.

We recently received a letter from the UUA President, Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt informing us that we are again an Honor Congregation having provided the fully requested amount based on our operating budget to the UUA. Being an Honor Congregation made it possible to purchase a license (3 years) to access the new, virtual hymnal which will add more variety to worship and other activities.

Being an Honor Congregation also allows us to request grants from the Unitarian Universalist Association Funding Program. These grants are for one-time specific purposes and are not continuing revenue, but they help with our overall finances. This year we received approximately \$15,000 in funding, a record I believe. A reminder that all request for grants must go to the Finance Committee for approval before the request can be made to the granting authority.

Looking forward to our continued growth.

Randy Kent
Board President



AMHERST LITTLE FREE PANTRY

Our next general meeting is Sunday, September 7, at noon in the Library/Living Room. Join us if you're interested in volunteering, or just want to learn more about our food justice ministry.

Pet food is the most-requested item on comment cards our users fill out. Jeri O'Donnell recently started attending our congregation and is a volunteer with WNY Food 4 Paws. She has already brought us a first carload of dog and cat foods. Thank you, Jeri! Using a model similar to the Lockport Peanut Butter and Jelly Ministry that ALFP benefits from, WNY Food 4 Paws collects pet food donations from manufacturers, pet stores, and the public (in designated barrels at local businesses) and then distribute it to food pantries "enabling families to keep their pets during financial hardships." You can learn more about their organization at wnyfood4paws.org.



Refund The Pantry



One of our fundraising initiatives is collecting returnable bottles and cans through our "Refund the Pantry" campaign. *Please rinse containers prior to donation!* Look for the round black plastic garbage totes next to the dumpster enclosure fence.



Don't forget to Refund the Pantry! Donate rinsed, returnable beverage containers in the round black plastic garbage cans next to the dumpster enclosure fence and Farmer Pirates tote. Thank you to Roger Keeney for diligently making the returns each week, and to Ruth Bowen who designed a poster for the lobby donation center.

Thank you to all our donors, who contribute in so many ways - financial gifts, donations of food and personal care items, take-out condiments and plasticware, travel personal care items, and BJ's coupon books. We are grateful for our volunteers, including daily stockers, substitute stockers, grocery shoppers, and baggers. Shout out to the UU Amherst Gardening Team, who have provided a steady stream of fresh produce this summer.

—Marie Evans, Chair



JUSTICE ADVOCACY TEAM

Looking ahead to the next year of resistance, the team has planned some fun and educational events. We will be offering a movie night featuring various documentaries on today's events (and popcorn!). We will also be hosting a Move On postcard/letter writing campaign to help save our democracy. Our poster/rock painting events will continue, but focus more on promoting change and community engagement. The Current Events zoom will be blended into the quarterly team meeting, as we take on new and exciting events partnering with others. Keep your eyes out for events on the bulletin board or in weekly announcements.

—Peggy/Mark Cook

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.



RAINBOW COALITION

The Coalition will be hosting a collaborative event with the Clothing Ministry, WNY Pride, and GLYS to host a day of fun at our facility. Watch for more information this Fall and be ready to join in the fun.

A poster for 'RAINBOW CAFÉ' at UU Amherst. It features a rainbow triangle logo in a circle, a QR code, and the text: 'RAINBOW CAFÉ', 'UU Amherst 6320 Main St.', '3rd Saturday of Month, 1-3 pm', 'Relax, enjoy, be comfortable in this safe, sacred space made for you. A place for conversation, a game or just to sit. Beverages & snacks freely offered (donations not refused 😊).', 'Let's create a kind, caring community to help us all through the events in our country. Remember, we are all just walking each other home.', and the URL 'https://uuamherst.org/wp2/rainbow-cafe/'.

RAINBOW CAFÉ
UU Amherst 6320 Main St.
3rd Saturday of Month, 1-3 pm

Relax, enjoy, be comfortable in this safe, sacred space made for you. A place for conversation, a game or just to sit. Beverages & snacks freely offered (donations not refused 😊).

Let's create a kind, caring community to help us all through the events in our country. Remember, we are all just walking each other home.

<https://uuamherst.org/wp2/rainbow-cafe/>

CULTURAL EXPLORERS

Theater season begins this month! The affordable Niagara Regional Theatre Guild in Tonawanda is presenting *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* for three weekends beginning September 19. The first production at Jewish Repertory Theatre in Getzville starts a bit later, October 30, with *Conscience*. Local schools will feature fall plays as well. Watch for all-church emails as details of outings become available.

UU AMHERST BOOK GROUP

UU Amherst Book Club next meets Sunday, September 28, at noon in the Library/Living Room. We'll choose a book for October and a topic for November, and talk about what we've read over the summer.

Book Club meets the last Sunday of the month (September through May). We alternate between picking a general TOPIC for the month (for which participants can choose any relevant book they'd like to read), and choosing one "common read" BOOK. All are welcome to attend our meetings, whether or not you've "done the reading."

—Marie Evans



SEPTEMBER 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)

Tuesday, September 2nd

10:00 am: Leadership Dev & Nominating Comm EM

12:00 pm: Women's Group Lunch EM

Saturday, September 6th

10:00 am: Lace Guild MMR (rental)

Sunday, September 7th

12:00 pm: Amherst Little Free Pantry LR

Wednesday, September 10th

7:30 pm: Board Meeting MMR

Saturday, September 13th

11:00 am: Firewall Protest (see page 7)

Pizza party to follow 1:00 pm EM

Tuesday, September 16th

6:30 pm: Lace Guild (rental) MMR

Wednesday, September 17th

6:00 pm: Finance Meeting MMR

Saturday, September 20th

9:00 am: Firewall CH/EM

1:00 pm: Rainbow Café MMR

Sunday, September 21st

11:45 am: Jetpig Adoption

12:00 pm: Justice Advocacy Meeting LR

Monday, September 22nd

7:30 pm: Havurah Service CH/EM

Tuesday, September 23rd

5:00 pm: Simple Family Series MMR/EM

Saturday, September 27th

9:30 am: Leadership Dev & Nominating Comm EM

Sunday, September 28th

12:00 pm: UU Amherst Book Group LR

Tuesday, September 30th

5:00 pm: Simple Family Series MMR/EM

RECURRING: SUNDAYS

Sundays, September 7th-28th

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, September 6th-27th

9:30 am: Sharing Circle Zadmin

7:00 pm: Birch Bunch Zadmin

Mondays, September 1st-29th

7:00 pm: Tulip Crabapples Zadmin (weekly)

Tuesdays, September 2nd-28th

12:30 pm: Women's Group Lunch EM (9/2)

Women's Group Zadmin (9/9, 9/16, 9/23, 9/30)

9/9 (2nd Tue)

7:00 pm: Marlana's Covenant Group LR

Wednesdays, September 3rd-29th

9/17 (3rd Wed)

1:30 pm: 3rd Wednesday Covenant Group Zoom

7:00 pm: Northtowns Village Zoom

Thursdays, September 4th-30th

9/18 (3rd Thu)

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

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, September 2nd. We will meet in the Emerson Room at 12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and a beverage. Other meeting dates via Zoom are: September 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th. 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 September 18th at 10:00 am on Zoom. Link provided by host Peggy/Mark Cook or request from the Office Administrator.

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.

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!

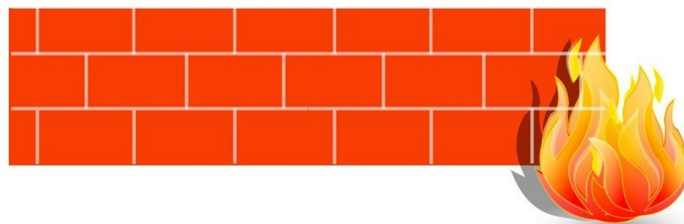
Needed: Technical Assistant(s) to work with Les in the loft as we live stream and record our services on Sunday mornings. You still get to experience the service - just from an elevated point of view!

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

Firewall Meeting

Saturday September 20th @ 9:00 am

Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst



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

Join us for ***"Takin' it to the Streets"*** protest on Transit Road & Main Street (Andale restaurant Lot) on Saturday September 13th at 11am-1pm.
Pizza party to follow in the Emerson Room

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

This month's blessing is actually a meditation I borrowed from a wonderful book that was recently gifted to Faith Development by Sally Hamlin (thanks, Sally!). The book is *On Wings of Light: Meditations for Awakening to the Source* and it has beautiful illustrations and messages so I thought I'd share a page from it as well as a picture of the spread so you can see the illustration. Here is the meditation:



Can you remember...

breathing the earth in through your feet and your nose and your eyes and feeling connected to all of nature?

Take a deep breath and let your body relax...

remember a time when your whole body resonated with the pulse of the earth.

I am connected to all that is, at one with the wholeness of life.

(Joan Borysenko, PhD., Joan Drescher)



Jetpig Adoptions

Children and families of all ages, stages and sizes are welcome to attend this event where kids will be invited to "adopt" a Jetpig stuffed animal during a fun ceremony. The ceremony will run during coffee hour after service on Sunday, September 21st.

After the adoption ceremony, all Jetpigs will stay at UU Amherst for a fun UU Camp, where the Jetpigs will learn all about UU values and history! Email updates will be sent out to families a few times per week to let everyone know what their Jetpig is up to and learning about. Once camp is over, kids will be reunited with their Jetpig to take them home and hear all about their adventures at UU Amherst!



If you would like to donate a Jetpig to the adoption event for families, we will be dedicating the Share the Plate on 9/7 to this venture. Jetpigs are \$17 each but all donations are appreciated! If you are a family interested in RSVP'ing for the Jetpig adoption, please send an email to Katie at dfd@uuamherst.org so you we can reserve your child(ren) a Jetpig.

Simply Family Series – Registration Open!

We'll be offering a free 8-week program for families, designed to provide tools, community and compassion in the journey of raising children. Guided by the book, *The Gifts of Imperfect Parenting* by Brené Brown, we'll offer a safe space for parents and caregivers to explore the topics the book offers and more.

Sessions will run September 23rd through November 11th every Tuesday from 5:00 - 7:30 pm. An inclusive meal and secular childcare will be provided. Please scan the QR code (right) to sign up for the program.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & NOMINATING COMMITTEE (LD&NC)

We are excited to announce that the Slate of Nominees for 2026 was endorsed by the Board of Trustees and can now be announced to the congregation:

ENDOWMENT TRUSTEES: five year term

Ryan Inge

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: three year term

Gabe Mighells

Marlana Rice

Peter Terhune

NOMINATING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: two year term

Lauraine Marcus

Susanne Sardella

Additionally, during the month of September, any voting member of the congregation may send suggestions for nominations to any member of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee.

—Julie Marquis, on behalf of Committee Members: Suzanne Christ, Chair; Jacqueline Babka; Ellen Moomaw; Ruth Bowen, BOT Liaison

CLOTHING MINISTRY

The clothing rack has been very busy recently. Summer clothing has flown off the rack and we are starting to put out school clothes. School supplies fly out of the cabinet too. Soon we will do the change over to cold weather clothing. As always, we thank you for your donations and we are always open if you want to shop the clothing pantry, Out of the Closet.

—Barbara Gauger Kent

FUNDRAISING TASK GROUP

Keep your eyes open for progress on the Universal Restroom in the Administration wing. We have contracted for asbestos removal and monitoring (paid for by our NYSUC grant). The partitions in both restrooms in preparation for the asbestos removal. Both restrooms have locking doors so you can still use them (unless the abatement is in progress). Once the asbestos floor tiles are removed the rooms will be available until construction starts. We will need help with funding the construction phase, so please consider donating cash, check, credit card, or directly from your retirement accounts. Designate any donations for the new restroom (asbestos removal, a new floor, and new paint in the second bathroom are a bonus). We will need to get a second bid for construction costs but we suspect the final cost will be in the \$10K to 15K range (excluding asbestos removal). With your help, we can do this.

—Barbara Kent Gauger for the Restroom Task Force (Barbara, Dian Tucker, and Doug Funke)

Coordination of Caretaker Duties — September

Sunday, August 31 - Saturday, September 6 - Randy Kent

Sunday, September 7 - Wednesday, September 17 - Bruce Becker

Thursday, September 18 - Tuesday, September 23 - Bob Johnson

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

CONNECTIONS

Help Us Help You—Share Your Emergency Contact Information

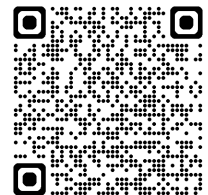
Your well-being is important to us, and having emergency contact details on file ensures we can provide swift assistance in urgent medical situations. We encourage all members of our congregation to consider submitting emergency contact information—while optional, it can be invaluable in times of need.

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

Print Your Cause UU Amherst Merch Online Store

SHOP HERE

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.

Note: this cake tastes best when chilled overnight, allowing the flavors to blend. With the apple crop just coming in, this cake is a great way to treat yourself with the local flavors.

Enjoy! Christine

From Robert Strybel, Polish Heritage Cookery

Easiest Apple Cake

375° 1 1/2 hours

- 2 1/2 lbs tart apples, peeled, cored and quartered
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs, plain
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 lb butter (1stick)
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon, cloves and/or nutmeg (optional)



Peel, core and quarter the apples. Grease 8X8” baking with butter. Season the apples with spice, if using, and add to the pan. In a medium bowl combine flour, sugar, bread crumbs and baking powder. Sprinkle mixture over apples and dot with butter.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven 45 to 50 minutes. Serve warm or cold with a dollop of whipped cream or a dusting of powdered sugar.



Save The Date!

2026 Generosity Campaign Kick-Off

Pancake Lunch

Sunday, September 28 - Following The Service
No Charge - Donations Are Welcomed!

**There Will Be A Short Presentation
By The 2026 Generosity Campaign Committee
Childcare Will Be Provided!**

*Help Support The Future Of
Liberal Religion For The Northtowns!*



UU AMHERST

Fostering Justice and Compassion

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