



MINISTER’S CORNER

Throughout the month of March, we’ll be offered the opportunity to **Pay Attention** - to slow down and really notice things, people, situations, etc. For my ‘corner’ this month, I am going to borrow from the Soul Matters prompt that uses Mary Oliver’s poem, Gratitude, as a starting point. Whether or not you choose to access the poem, I invite you to engage her questions of noticing as you reflect on moments that arise throughout your day.

- What did you notice?
- What did you hear?
- What did you admire?
- What astonished you?
- What would you like to see again?
- What was most tender?
- What was most wonderful?
- What did you think was happening?

What if you spent the long month of March using these prompts to end each day? You might decide to journal about your noticing, or perhaps just let images or snatches of conversations rise in your memory. I can’t help but notice that these ‘noticings’ (ha!) are invitations to remove ourselves from doom scrolling or watching endless news cycles and to pay attention to what is right in front of us.

With gratitude,
Rev. Michelle

March Services

3/1 Radical Hospitality (in an inhospitable world) Rev. Michelle

3/8 Choosing Understanding Over Being Understood Katie Cosgrove, DFD
In a world full of unrest, polarization and “unfriending,” how do our values call us to embrace discomfort and lean in *with love*.

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 transitions with honesty, appreciation and love.

3/15 Paying Attention: The Practice of Covenantal Love Kim Diana Connolly
Love is not only a feeling ... it is a practice. Together we’ll reflect on how paying attention is one of the ways we live our covenant with one another. Drawing on the recent agreement between the New York State Attorney General’s Office and Buffalo Public Schools to address harmful student discipline practices in our region, we’ll explore what happens when a community listens, works across differences, and commits to accountability. How do we stay attentive after promises are made? Join us as we consider how paying attention becomes faithful love in action.

3/22 Do UUs Pray? (If so, how. If not, why not?) Rev. Michelle

3/29 Trans Day of Visibility Justice Advocacy Team

WELCOME NEW BOARD LEADERSHIP

Although we turned the calendar page to 2026 back in January, it is at the beginning of March, following the annual meeting of the congregation, that a new year begins. That seems appropriate with the vernal equinox approaching later in March; the time when the light has finally caught up and there is a moment of balance before the light increases with the return to activity in our hemisphere.

We've thanked outgoing leaders for their contributions in service to the health and wellbeing of UU Amherst, and now it is time to welcome new leaders into this service. The new Board is made up of individuals from within the congregation who have been members for at least one year, have 'rooted' themselves and become involved in church life, and have demonstrated a commitment to bring their talents to keep UU Amherst 'green and growing.'

Since not everyone reading this may have been present at the annual meeting, I think it is useful to share the expectations of leadership in a covenantal community.

Trustees, as this congregation's elected leaders you hold the interests and needs of this congregation as a sacred trust.

As Leaders, you are stewards of the spirit of cooperation and interdependence in our congregation.

Leaders take responsibility for moving our church forward; generating energy and enthusiasm for our common work.

Leaders embrace challenges with optimism and courage

Leaders call forth the leadership gifts in others and encourage new leaders.

Those are *your* responsibilities, but the congregation has responsibilities as well.

Congregation, It is up to you to follow with responsible trust the leadership of those you have elected, even as they strive to continue to deserve your confidence

It is up to you to speak out on issues that arise in the gathered community. You can expect the Board to respect your opinions and to be guided by the needs of the congregation. That does not mean you will always get what you want. Your elected leadership may have a differing perspective. Do not undermine their work. Together we rejoice in all that we do as a beloved community and as a beacon of tolerance, faith, and reason in our community. The new adventure begins.

—Rev. Michelle

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



Dear Friends,

Now that a 2026 budget has been passed, you might think that we are done offering some thoughts about money, but there are some important things for you to know about how we are able to accept with gratitude your offerings, and how those monies are distributed.

The budget is utilized by the Board of Trustees as both a planning tool and as an ongoing barometer of the congregation’s financial health. Once the budget is approved by the congregation, the anticipated revenues and expenses are compared to the actual results over the course of the year, which assist in the development of future budgets. Accordingly, the budgeted allocation of funds to specific programs and expense lines are not altered or transferred to other lines during the budget year. It’s important to remember that going ‘over budget’ is sometimes absolutely warranted and necessary.

Occasionally, we do have special projects, approved by the Board, that we encourage you to give to; think of the new boiler that heats the chapel or the universal bathrooms that are currently under construction. These are projects outside the regular budget process since they may arise out of immediate necessity or are begun with grant monies and then finished by the generosity of our members and friends.

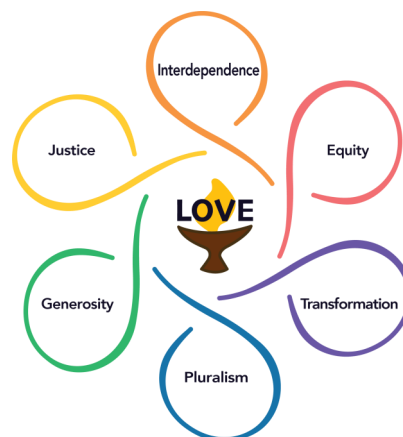
Please note that pledge payments and donations received (excluding donations made to specific, Board-approved, fundraising campaigns or to the Minister’s Discretionary Fund) are utilized for the overall general operations of the congregation. We understand the potential desire to designate your payments and donations for specific programs or expense categories, but we are unable to honor those requests without creating havoc with our budgeting and bookkeeping. And we want our financial reporting to be above reproach at all times. You have entrusted your contributions to us and we make every effort to live up to that trust.

And a note about “pass-thru” donations... Any funds that are “pass-thru” to another agency or cause are not recorded as donations to UU Amherst, since UU Amherst is not the final recipient. Checks are made out to UU Amherst with the agency or cause in the memo line so that we can cash those checks and make out a single check to the recipient. Only contributions (pledges and donations) that benefit UU Amherst directly are recorded in our system and included in the statements provided to you. We hope that clarifies any misunderstandings.

Thank you for your generous contributions that keep us going and growing. As you know, we do not receive funds from the national UUA, rather, we contribute to them as our “face” to the world. Together, we are making a difference!

With gratitude,

Rev. Michelle and the Finance Committee



Shared Values graphic created by Tanya Webster for the UUA.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Katie Cosgrove, Director of Faith Development

March Blessing

Make me an instrument of universal curiosity.
Where there is anger, let me plant love;
Where there is hurt, let me learn repair;
Where there is darkness, let me be the light,

And most of all, give me the lens to see the cracks around me that could heal with these gifts.

Allow me the attention to bend my time to mend, honor or understand all that is around me.

What may I see today?

–By Katie, inspired by the prayer of St. Francis (& Rev. Michelle)

The Month Ahead: March Is for Mending

As we practice our resilience tools from the Sundays past (and a very frigid cold front), we're called to *pay attention*. I invite you to pay attention to what you use in this world, and better yet, what you store away to maybe deal with another time.

I type this as two full boxes of clothes I've promised to sew sit under my bed collecting dust. That's why I want to make an intentional effort to give us space to mend. We have some things in Faith Development, especially beloved stuffed animals, that could use a little love and care. In March, we'll be taking a look, together, at how we can take pride in refurbishing the items around us to give them new life, while also learning new skills.

Philosophy & Spirituality Circle

The next Philosophy & Spirituality Circle will be on March 15th at 11:45 am in the Atrium. Bring your morning drink and pull up a chair for some juicy conversation on personal ethics and how they relate to our spiritual selves. No RSVP or philosophy knowledge needed.

Equinox Game Day

Get ready for another fun game day! Join us for a Equinox themed game day in the Emerson Room from 11:00 am-1:30 pm on Saturday, March 21st. We'll be focusing on cooperative games and we'll have some to play for all ages but feel free to bring your own as well.

Covenant Session for Families

After service on Sunday, March 22nd, we'll be having another covenant session for parents and caregivers in the Murray Meeting Room. We'll have staffed childcare as well as snacks down there for all to enjoy. Please feel free to grab your morning drink and meet us down there around 11:45 am.



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.

MARCH 2026 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)

Sunday, March 1st

12:00 pm: UU Amherst Book Group LR

12:00 pm: Safety Committee BUL

2:30 pm: Shamanic Journey (rental) LR

Tuesday, March 3rd

10:30 am: Leadership Dev & Nominating Comm EM

12:30 pm: Women's Group Lunch EM

Wednesday, March 4th

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

Friday, March 6th

7:00 pm: Justice Advocacy Team Movie Night EM

Saturday, March 7th

10:00 am: Lace Guild (rental) MMR

Sunday, March 8th

12:00 pm: Amherst Little Free Pantry MMR

12:00 pm: Justice Advocacy Team Meeting LR

Wednesday, March 11th

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

Saturday, March 14th

9:30 am: Holistic Balance Retreat (rental) BUL

1:00 pm: Rainbow Café MMR

Sunday, March 15th

2:30 pm: Shamanic Journey (rental) LR

Wednesday, March 18th

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

6:00 pm: Finance Committee MMR

7:30 pm: Board Meeting MMR

Saturday, March 21st

9:00 am: Firewall CH/EM

11:00 am: Equinox Games Atrium

Sunday, March 22nd

12:00 pm: Faith Dev Q&A MMR

(con'td)

Wednesday, March 25th

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

Saturday, March 28th

5:30 pm New UU Potluck EM

Sunday, March 29th

12:00 pm UU Amherst Book Group LR

RECURRING: SUNDAYS

Sundays, March 1st-29th

9:15 am: Soulful Conversations LR

9:30 am: Sacred Singing Circle MMR

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

Mondays, March 2nd-30th

7:00 pm: Tulip Crabapples Zadmin (weekly)

Tuesdays, March 3rd-31st

12:30 pm: Women's Group Lunch EM (3/3)

Women's Group Zadmin (3/10, 3/17, 3/24), 3/31)

3/10 (2nd Tue)

7:00 pm: Marlana's Covenant Group LR

Wednesdays, March 4th-25th

3/18 (3rd Wed)

1:00 pm: 3rd Wed Covenant Group Zoom

7:00 pm: Bofinger Covenant Group Zoom

7:00 pm: Northtowns Village Zoom

Saturdays, March 7th-28th

9:30 am: Sharing Circle Zadmin

Coordination of Caretaker Duties — March

Sun, March 1 - Sat, March 7 - Bruce Becker

Sun, March 8 - Sat, March 14 - Dian & Don Tucker

Sun, March 15 - Sat, March 21 - Bob Johnson

Sun, March 22 - Sat, March 28 - Randy Kent

Sun, March 29 - Sat, April 4 - Bruce Becker



Soulful Conversations

Looking for connection with others on a deeper level than Coffee Hour? Or simply needing a place to “land” if you get to church early? Join Soulful Conversations in the Living Room starting about 9:15 am. Coffee and tea will be available. An inspirational writing, poem, or music will focus the gathering (feel free to bring one of your own). Conversations will follow. The group will break up in time for service.

Soulful Singing Circle

Come and sing with us every Sunday morning in the Murray Meeting Room from 9:15-10:30 am before service. No knowledge or experience in music is needed.

Tuesday Women’s Group

This month our in-person meeting will be Tuesday, March 3rd. We will meet in the Emerson Room at 12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and a beverage. Other meeting dates via Zoom are: March 10th, 17th, 24th, and 31st. Zoom link provided by host Marge Marcille or Office Administrator.

Extra Pair of Hands

Looking for a way to help out at UUAmherst? Taking part in our “Extra Pair of Hands” program is a great way to help out and get to know people. You can be a Worship Weaver, Greeter, Kitchen Crew, Coffee Clean-up, or FD* Friend. Get more information at the Welcome Desk.

*FD is Faith Development and Nursery



Ministry Train Update Saturday, February 28th 9:30 am-12 noon (in person, weather permitting)

The Ministry Train will arrive at the station and you are welcome to hop on! Be part of the action as the ministry team-leads (and others) come together to consider programming for the coming season. Have a voice and a part in these decisions.

Coffee Hour Contributions

Have you noticed that the price of coffee has gone up (along with everything else)? Yeah, so have we. Your contributions to the Sunday coffee are greatly appreciated. And if you’re planning to bring nibbles to share, please (oh please), do not bring candy. We love our energetic children - and they have all the energy they need! Thanks for understanding.

Grief & Loss Workshop Saturday, April 4th, 7:00 pm

All UU Amherst members and friends are welcome to attend a Grief & Loss Workshop that will be held just before sunset on Saturday, April 4th, from 7:00-8:30 pm in the Sanctuary. Whether you're carrying grief from a loss of a beloved, wrestling with agony in our world or just feeling a sense of grief with no words for what was even lost, please come.

In our solemn and quiet night together, we'll be carving out a space to hold and honor our grief, while also practicing some tools to move with it. Feel free to bring a plus one.

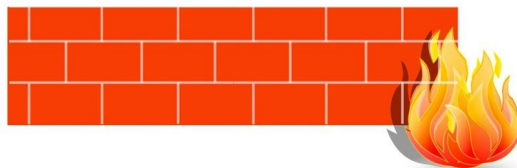
Facilitated by Rev. Michelle & Katie.

Firewall Meeting

Saturday March 21@ 9:00 am

Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst

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



One week before the 3rd NO KINGS protest. Join us to plan for this event!

Follow us on [YouTube: @FirewallUmbrellaWNY](#)

Check us out on Bluesky by clicking on the QR code. [Firewall451.bsky.social](#)

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

AMHERST LITTLE FREE PANTRY

The pantry is hosting a pop-up **Chili Cook-off** on **Sunday, March 8th**, in the Emerson Room after the service. Free to attend! If you're interested in making chili, we will provide the beans. Eight different kinds of chili will be offered, and tasters can vote for their favorite. There will be a prize. We welcome donations of sides, toppings, or beverages. See one of the pantry directors to sign up to provide food or drink.

Thank you to everyone who supported our Super Bowl game. Winners were one unsold square, "Huey," Marlana Rice and Betty Crump, and Tammy Beckman. A portion of the winnings were donated back to us.

We consistently need: cereal, soup broth, pasta sauce in cans (Hunt's or DelMonte) or plastic bottles (\$1.29 at Wegmans), canned meats (especially tuna in oil; maybe corned beef for St. Patrick's Day?), baked or refried beans, Chef Boyardee, canned fruit, coffee (grounds, K-cups, or instant), dishwashing soap, and can openers (\$1.25 at Dollar Tree stores).

Other ways to donate: bring returnable beverage containers for Refund the Pantry or buy Used Books from the white shelving in the Library/Living Room.

Looking for an easy way to volunteer? Do you come to meetings or events at The U during the week? See one of our Directors to learn how to do a mini-restock. Even 5-10 items added when the cupboards are bare is appreciated!

—Marie Evans, Chair, on behalf of Doreen Park and Meg Sabella



UU AMHERST BOOK GROUP

Our book discussion group normally meets the last Sunday each month at noon in the Library/Living Room. Due to the Annual Meeting, we'll meet twice in March. For the first get-together, we'll all read the same book. For the second gathering, read any book that fits the topic.

- March 1 BOOK: *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi
- March 29 TOPIC: Animals

—Marie Evans

Equinox Games

The Community that plays together, stays together! So let's do that!

Saturday, March 21st, all ages

11:00 am-1:30 pm Murray Meting Room

(in the administrative/FD wing)

When was the last time you played a game that involved actual humans in close proximity? Play is good for us! It keeps our minds nimble and weaves the strong strands of community.

We're combining the Equinox energy of balance and cooperation with an opportunity to make friends and have fun. This is an all-ages event. You're welcome to bring a snack to share. Bring friends! Offer a ride to someone who might otherwise miss out! (RSVP to Rev. Michelle just so we have a sense of numbers).



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 the best recipe I have found for Maryland crab cakes

Maryland Crab Cakes

450 degree oven 1/2 hour total time

- 1 lb lump crab meat, checked to remove any shells and membranes
- 1/2 cup Panko crumbs
- 6 Tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp prepared yellow mustard
- 1 tsp Old Bay seasoning
- Juice of one lemon
- 1 1/2 tps fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/4 tsp each salt and pepper
- 1 Tbsp butter cut into 8 cubes
- 1 baking sheet lined with parchment paper



Have all your ingredients ready because this recipe will go very quickly. Set oven at 450 degrees.

Mix all ingredients except the crab and butter together until well blended. Carefully stir in the crab trying not to break up the lumps. Using a 1/4 cup measure, make 8 mounds on the prepared sheet. Press a butter cube onto the top of each.

Cook 8 to 10 minutes then turn on the broiler and cook about 2 minutes until golden brown. Serve immediately. To prepare a single serving, when you have formed the 8 crab cakes, cook 2 and freeze the remaining portions for later use.



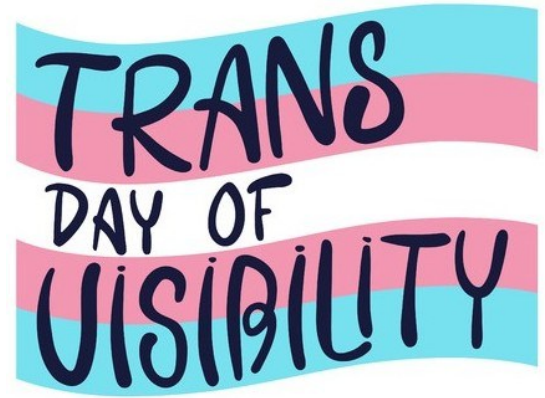
UU AMHERST ONLINE STORE

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

JUSTICE ADVOCACY

On March 8th, the Justice Advocacy Team will be meeting to plan out the next quarter and work to undertake. There is so much to do; be it protest, make calls, write letters, put together guerilla warfare items and distribute them, do works of community care, educate ourselves and so much more. Come and help us choose the path forward.

Rainbow Coalition. March marks not only St. Patrick's Day, but the Trans Day of Visibility. Started by transgender activist Rachel Crandall Crocker of Michigan in 2009, this day celebrates with joy the accomplishments and achievements of Trans individuals. We will be presenting different information and activities throughout the month to celebrate Trans lives.



Coming Up:

- March 6th 7:00-9:00 pm Mindful Movies viewing *Immigration Nation*, Emerson Room
- March 8th Noon Quarterly Team Meeting, Living Room
- March 14th 1:00-3:00 pm Rainbow Café, Murray Meeting Room TDoV and St. Patrick celebration
- March 21st 9:00 -11:30 am Firewall, Emerson Room & Chapel
- March 22-31st Trans Day of Visibility activities

RAINBOW COALITION

The Rainbow Coalition hosted the Rainbow Cafe on Saturday, February 14th. The theme was The Free Love movement with learning and intergenerational discussion on the written history versus the lived experience of the movement. March's Cafe will celebrate World Trans Day of Visibility and St. Patrick's Day. Rainbow Cafe takes place every second Saturday and all queer people and their direct allies are invited.

—April Starr

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & NOMINATING COMMITTEE

This was the last meeting for Chair Suzanne Christ and member Jacqueline Babka, having fulfilled their two-year term. A huge thank you to both these wonderful ladies for their hard work and stewardship over the past twenty-four months.

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

Contributing Stocks & Securities

We are now able to accept stocks and securities.

If interested, contact Bruce Becker.

INSPIRATIONAL READ

Embracing an Eco-Spiritual Identity

Our instinctive recognition of the sacred in nature is like an ancestral genome we carry that arouses within us a thirst for connection, enchantment, and a celebration of all life.

I have never identified myself as pagan in my spiritual beliefs or practice. Apparently, I was wrong.

Coming from a family of Catholics, espousing pagan ideas veered close to being called a heretic; one step further and I might have been branded a witch. Yet, in recent years, I've come to experience the sacred in nature and fully embrace the wisdom of Celtic and Indigenous traditions. Besides, I would argue, aren't some of Christianity's most venerated saints those who found God in nature? Was I now a pagan? Or was I some kind of spiritual hybrid without a name?

I returned to this question often, wondering how exactly to fit my paganist affinity into a neat spiritual package, as do many of you I imagine. (Spoiler: It's actually a messy, muddy package.)

Our Rustic Roots

I discovered through a little online digging that the word "pagan" is derived from the Latin *paganus* meaning country dweller, rural, or rustic. With the arrival of Christianity, it became associated with those who continued to practice polytheism or ethnic religions—often nature-based. They were the *rustics*.

In truth, we've all inherited the spiritual DNA of those who came before us. Our pre-Christian ancestors worshipped goddesses, prayed in groves, baptized in rivers, celebrated the solstices and equinoxes. They revered what was life-giving and sustaining. They were pagans. Rustics. And, not surprisingly, rustic is on the rise.

From Paganism to Eco-Spirituality

Like the Christian desert mothers and fathers; the monks and mystics who encountered nature as sacred and found in the language of the wind and burbling creeks a connection to the divine, we are reclaiming our reverence for nature wisdom under the contemporary label of "eco-spirituality." And, yes, eco-spirituality is a messy, muddy package—a weaving together of beliefs and practices embedded in dirt, tides, and fire.

Embracing an eco-spiritual identity comes in a variety of flavors. We can build and worship in wild churches. Seek spiritual nourishment in nature as we at The U do each Sunday in the warm weather months with a "Church of the Wild" gathering. Celebrate the cycles of nature through the Celtic Wheel of the Year (see the Equinox Games event here March 24th!). Teach our children to regard the Earth and all created life as our relatives. Or simply walk into the woods, immerse our senses, and listen with the heart for nature to share its secrets. We can become wisdom weavers, as I've decided is my comfortable identity, drawing insights, truth, spiritual sustenance, and joy from our roots and reclaiming our oneness with all creation.

—Elaine "Elle" Harrigan (UU Amherst Administrator) hosts the website livingwildwisdom.com and is a regular contributor to the Religious Naturalist Association newsletter. Her essays are included *Gather: a celebration of women's circles* and *The Book of Uncommon Rituals* (Fall 2026). She currently offers a year-long tutorial series on the contemplative practice of "reading the land," a secular adaptation of *terra divina*.





UU AMHERST

Fostering Justice and Compassion

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