

Issue

AUGUST 2026

The Foreword

The Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst
6320 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221
716-634-3010 (x101 for office)
Office Hours Tues.—Fri. 9am to 2pm www.uuamherst.org



UU AMHERST

*Fostering Justice
and Compassion*

Our Staff:

Minister

Rev. Michelle Buhite
Office.....x102
716-513-0170
minister@uuamherst.org

Office Administrator

Elaine Harrigan.....x101
administrator@uuamherst.org

Finance

April Starr.....x103
bookkeeper@uuamherst.org

Director of Faith Development

Katie Cosgrove.....x104
716-513-0172
voicemail only
dfd@uuamherst.org

Children's Program Assistant

Molly Breen

Youth Program Assistant

Kyla Hoffman

Minister Emerita

Rev. Maureen Q. Thitchener

Belonging Here

Rev. Sally (helping out while Rev. Michelle is on sabbatical til end of August...)

I remember when I decided to become a Unitarian Universalist in the late 1980's. My family—my husband Dave and our two young daughters—had recently returned to Buffalo after living in Vancouver British Columbia for nine years.

Our new landlady MaryAnn Iggulden was a lifelong Unitarian. I had just taken a new position as a nurse practitioner at Planned Parenthood, and was realizing quickly how much the Buffalo community I had returned to was still a place where people routinely asked one another “What are you?”- meaning “What religion are you? Where do you go to church?” In the relaxed and liberal Canadian west coast city of Vancouver, this had never been a concern. We freely explored our spiritual/religious/political yearnings wherever they led us, but never felt compelled to formally join a congregation.

And now here we were, living on Parkside Avenue, across from the zoo's giraffe enclosure; our children attended Buffalo schools; Dave worked at the University. My siblings' religious affiliations spanned the spectrum from conservative evangelical to moderate protestant leanings. One day after my landlady inquired how we were settling in, I shared my thoughts about Buffalo being quite a cultural change for us. I was feeling an unfamiliar need to find a religious home that reflected our family's more agnostic/atheistic beliefs, and perhaps a more formal religious alliance, when MaryAnn said to me “I don't know you very well yet, but I think you might be a Unitarian Universalist.”

What a gift her words were to me that day! Without meaning to, she had said the very thing that would change my life's course for decades to come.

Where would I be today without my beloved faith community? Unitarian Universalism is my religious home, the place where I can ask questions, search with others to make meaning of our rapidly changing and often harsh world. It is a comfort to me to sing and gather and listen and grow and learn together. This is the place which, even when we make mistakes or unintentionally hurt one another, we can begin again, in Love.

And that is what it means to Belong Here. And I am forever grateful!
In faith and service.

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.*

AUGUST SERVICES SUNDAYS 10:30 AM

Note: Rev. Michelle will be on sabbatical through August 18th.

August 2nd “Promises That Make Us”

Kim Diana Connolly

What kind of community are we co-creating at UU Amherst, and what promises help us become the people we hope to be? Drawing on surprising lessons from crafting a personal covenant and experiences from this summer's Unitarian Universalist General Assembly and Summer Institute, we will reflect on love, accountability, belonging, and the power of individual and shared promises. Join us as we celebrate the promises that help create beloved community!

August 9th “Troubled Hope”

Julie Taylor

These turbulent times have caused us to confront how we should live in a world that at times is uncaring. We live into our journey because we know just how difficult life is, and at the same time we never give up the hope that we will prevail. We have each other, and we never lose hope.

August 16th “Light Me Up: The Role of Creativity and Passion in Our Lives”

Marlana Rice and Rev. Sally Hamilin

Join us for this fun-filled service of music and poetry and stories and art! Come feed your curiosity with laughter and joy!

August 23rd “The Labyrinth”

john Snodgrass

Long before the myth of the Minotaur, the rounded maze shape has evoked powerful emotional responses, sometimes calming and sometimes invigorating. How deep does the labyrinthine quest for the heart of the maze go?

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*.

August 30th “To Make An End Is To Make A Beginning”

Rev. Michelle

Does it seem like days and years careen onward with barely a moment to take a breath or think a thought? Let's take the opportunity to slow down and make space for gratitude and anticipation.



BOARD REPORT

Walking Our Unitarian Talk at UU Amherst

I attended the Better Angels workshop at UU Amherst in July and was again thankful that so many of our programs help us WALK OUR UNITARIAN TALK. When we walk our UU talk, we act with integrity and consistency between what we say and what we do.

Those who attended the Braver Angels Workshop had an opportunity to practice communication skills that support acceptance of one another, even those who might vehemently disagree with our political beliefs. The session reminded me that we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, even those who espouse beliefs that may at times enrage us.

Often, I am frustrated, feeling my hands are tied, and I can't have an influence in government policy that injures others. Going to a Firewall meeting or writing a postcard seems by itself to be a small thing, but hundreds of thousands of individual UU actions can have an impact

When we take advantage of opportunities highlighted in our Justice Advocacy emails that include communicating with our Congressmen and Congresswomen, attending webinars with a focus on current issues, working with community groups on local issues, we are walking our Unitarian talk and modeling the right of conscience and the use of democratic processes. within our congregations and in society at large.

Living our values often isn't easy. I am thankful for being part of a community that encourages me to try harder – a community that supports me when I'm most frustrated – and a Sunday morning that provides a safe space, a calming space, a supportive space. Let's appreciate the progress we've made and the journey we've had to get where we are. And let's be excited for the journey ahead...I am so thankful to our community leaders and volunteers who invest hours in creating opportunities for us to make a difference. None of this would be possible without our beloved community that does walk the talk.

–Ruth Bowen, Board Chair



Joint Pantry and Board Ice Cream Social Fundraiser

Join the Pantry and Board of Trustees for an Ice Cream Social Fundraiser on Sunday, August 9th after service. You'll find a variety of ice creams and toppings, perfect for a summer day. Choose from a cup, cone, even a sundae. This is a joint fundraiser with proceeds going to both the Amherst Little Free Pantry (ALFP) and UU Amherst.

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

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

August Blessing

I recently ordered a handmade ceramic "Guardian Vessel" for my personal spiritual practice from artist and animal chaplain Sophie Gamand. Inside the package was a card from her shelter cat oracle deck with a simple message: "You can step away and still belong."



As DFD, I often hear, "I'm sorry we/I haven't been..." or "things have been so busy..." I do my best to instill a confidence that no apologies, explanations, guilt or otherwise are ever needed, but I do understand where these feelings come from—as I find myself saying and feeling similar things often.



Whether stepping away means tending your spirit elsewhere (outdoors, with family, traveling), making room for life's stickier moments or even just reconnecting with yourself, you still belong. So, in this bright and busy summer month of August, I offer you this short blessing, adapted from a wise shelter cat: *I can step away, and still belong*

Atrium Plant Watering

Have you ever noticed a plant in the Atrium (the room off the Sanctuary) looking a little thirsty? Now everyone can help!

We've rehomed a few plants that needed different conditions, so the Atrium is looking greener than ever! To make plant care easy, we've created a simple laminated watering log. Anyone can check the log and water the plants that need attention that week. You'll find the log on the small table by the plants, with the watering cans just to the left.



Philosophy & Spirituality Circle: August 2nd

Everyone is welcome to join a monthly drop-in conversation group that will use philosophical prompts to explore individual thoughts about morality, ethics, meaning and more, through the lens of spirituality.

Participants of all backgrounds and beliefs are welcome. No philosophy knowledge or RSVP needed. Just meet us in the back of the Sanctuary by 12:00 pm on Sunday, August 2nd, with your morning beverage of choice!

In Community,
Katie Cosgrove (she/her)
Director of Faith Development
dfd@uuamherst.org

AMHERST LITTLE FREE PANTRY

The pantry is a member organization of Ample Harvest, meaning we gratefully accept fresh produce from home gardeners. Vegetables from The U's garden are a welcome addition to our offerings, and are picked up quickly by users, so we'd be happy to accept any surplus from your personal garden. Even zucchini!

All donations - household supplies, food or funds - are appreciated! Every week we buy pasta sauce, cereal, Chef Boyardee, and shelf-stable milk. Tuna, baked and refried beans, pasta, canned fruit, juice, rice or potato sides, and mac 'n' cheese are frequently on our grocery lists. We're lucky to get fairly regular donations of canned chicken, peanut butter and jelly. Even in warm weather, there's demand for soup and hot cocoa mix. Laundry detergent and toilet paper are the most popular non-food items we regularly purchase. Weather-permitting, we offer Kreher's Farm Fresh Eggs, graciously donated by that family. We distribute cat and dog food, courtesy of WNY Food 4 Paws and the SPCA. We are able to stock full-size packages of menstrual care products thanks to "The Cheryl Fund."

-Marie Evans, ALFP Chair



UU AMHERST BOOK GROUP

Our book discussion group meets 4th Sundays at noon in the Library/Living Room at UU Amherst during the program year. We alternate between choosing a book to read together or picking a topic for which we select our own book.

The next gathering is September 27th and we're doing something a bit different. It's a BOOK month, but you have a choice between two related titles: (narrative financial history) *1929: Inside the Greatest Crash in Wall Street History and How It Shattered a Nation* by Andrew Ross Sorkin, OR (fiction) *Trust* by Hernán Díaz, four books in one (different genres and perspectives), about a couple who accumulated great wealth in the 1920's and even during the Depression. (Overachievers: feel free to read both!)

October is a TOPIC month: "The Responsible Quest for Truth & Meaning". Choose any book you like that fits the theme and join the conversation on October 25.

-Marie Evans

USED BOOKS

The white shelves in the Library/Living Room are more organized! Thank you to Meg Sabella, Debby Berg, and Betty Crump for sorting help. The first three sections are non-fiction and the final two are fiction. Your free will offering benefits Amherst Little Free Pantry. Suggested donation is \$1 per book. Look for the cash box or scan a QR code.

AUGUST 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)

Saturday, August 1st

10:00 am: Lace Guild (rental) LR

Sunday, August 2nd

12:00 pm: Philosophy & Spirituality Circle CH

2:30 pm: Shamanic Journey (rental) LR

Tuesday, August 4th

10:30 am: Leadership Dev & Nominating Comm EM

12:30 pm: Women's Group Lunch EM

Wednesday, August 5th

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

Saturday, August 8th

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

Sunday, August 9th

11:00 am: Ice Cream Social EM

Wednesday, August 12th

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

Saturday, August 15th

1:00 pm: Firewall EM/CH

Sunday, August 16th

12:00 pm: Safety Committee MMR

2:30 pm: Shamanic Journey (rental) LR

Tuesday, August 18th

6:30 pm: Lace Guild (rental) LR

Wednesday, August 19th

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

6:00 pm: Finance Meeting MMR

7:30 pm: Board Meeting MMR

Saturday, August 22nd

12:00 pm: UU Congregational Picnic Patio

Wednesday, August 26th

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

RECURRING: SUNDAYS

Sundays, August 2nd-30th

9:30 am: Church of the Wild EC

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, August 3rd-31st

7:00 pm: Tulip Crabapples Zadmin (weekly)

Wednesdays, August 5th-26th

8/9 (3rd Wed)

7:00 pm: Northtowns Village Zoom

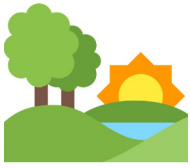
Saturdays, August 1st-29th

9:30 am: Sharing Circle Zadmin

7:00 pm: Birch Bunch Zadmin

Coffee Hour Contributions

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.



Church of the Wild

Join us 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 near the basketball court at the back of the parking lot. Church of the Wild is an all weather event (except a torrential downpour).

Sacred Singing Circle

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

Tuesday Women's Group

The Women's Group is now meeting for in-person lunch, only, the first Tuesday of the month. Our next lunch gathering will be on August 4th in the Emerson Room at 12:30 pm. Bring your lunch and a beverage.

Memorial Service Volunteers Needed

Memorial Services are an important part of our spiritual mission. Often, receptions follow in the Emerson Room. Please lend a hand to help your community connect and reflect on the life of their loved one. We are there to support healing through shared memories, stories, food, and drink. Contact Dian Tucker, directly, to volunteer for this important work or email administrator@uuamherst.org.

Save the Date!

Potluck & Workshop

Friday, September 18th, 5:30-8:00 pm

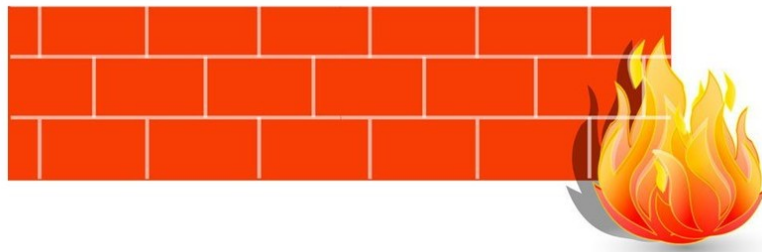
Rev. Douglas Taylor from UU Binghamton will guide us through a workshop to prepare UU Amherst for the transition from pastoral-sized to program-sized congregation and all that means. If you are in leadership or simply curious, put the date in your calendar. Sign-ups for the potluck will be available in late August.

Firewall Meeting

Saturday August 15th@ 9:00 am

Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst

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



Our guest Speaker is Bridge Rauch – Environmental Justice Organizer Clean Air Coalition of WNY

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.

COVENANT CORNER

General Assembly and Summer Institute, and Getting Ready for Continued Covenant Renewal!

It has been a joyful and full UU summer so far!

In June, I had the privilege of serving as Lead of the General Assembly Covenant Team for both the online and in-person portions of GA, the latter in Louisville, Kentucky. Thankfully, it was a relatively quiet year for the Covenant Team, allowing us to focus on welcoming, supporting, and caring for participants. General Assembly completed a full business agenda, including actions related to youth leadership, immigrant justice, environmental advocacy, transitional ministry, and the future governance of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. While there were some accessibility challenges in the new multi-platform format, the week was grounded in love, worship, and community.

Our family headed to Summer Institute at Oberlin College, where the joyful mayhem of SI was once again on full display! Tayte served as lead for the Young Adult Community and, despite an inaccessible residence hall during the first days of the week, helped ensure that the young adults remained fully included in worship, fellowship, and community by finding alternative gathering spaces until the building became accessible. It was a beautiful example of covenant in action.

I returned to the Summer Institute Committee on Ministry this spring to fill a sad and unexpected vacancy, and it was wonderful to serve this beloved community again. I also had the pleasure of co-leading six afternoon workshops with Central East Region Lead Tyler Coles titled *Co-Creating the Future of SI Magic*. More than fifty participants gathered in circle to reflect on SI's history, imagine its future, and explore how covenant, belonging, and love continue to shape this remarkable community. The photos show our family representing UU Amherst at SI and our congregation's beautiful (and delightfully heavy!) banner in the annual Banner Parade.

As we prepare to continue the sacred work of renewing our congregational covenant this fall, I invite you to join us for worship on August 2 for "Promises That Make Us," a service exploring love, belonging, accountability, and the promises that shape who we are.



JUSTICE ADVOCACY GROUP

Future events for the Justice Advocacy Team, including the Rainbow Coalition are yet to be determined. Stay tuned!

–Lauraine Marcus & Mark Cook

NEW 2UU CONVERSATION Sunday, September 6th, 12 noon Murray Meeting Room

Are you fairly new to UU and/or UU Amherst? Would you like to know more, ask questions, and generally get to know us better? Join Rev. Michelle in the Murray Meeting Room (in the Admin/FD wing) at noon on Sunday, 9/6. Yes, it's Labor Day. Come to church anyway! Questions? minister@uuamherst.org

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The LD&NC presented the July 12th service "Have You Heard of Braver Angels?" Representatives from the group talked of the group's history, and its mission to unite people across political, cultural and generational divides, and how to start the process of bridging the gaps between them.

They also presented the workshop "Depolarizing Ourselves" after the service. A big thank you to them, and all who attended, for taking part."

WNY Braver Angels will hold a Debate Series in August, September, and October at the Lancaster Village Center, 11 W. Main St. at 7:00 pm. A Braver Angels debate isn't to win; it's to understand the other side a little better. For questions, email WNYBraverAngels@gmail.com

–Julie Marquis, on behalf of: Lauraine Marcus and Susanne Sardella, co-chairs; Ellen Moomaw; and Marlana Rice, BOT Liaison



MINISTRY TRAIN UPDATE

The Ministry Train is pulling into the station with a September 2-fer! On **September 18th** Rev. Douglas Taylor from UU Binghamton will offer a workshop for ministry team leads, the Board, and anyone else who is interested as we consider the path forward from a 'pastoral' sized congregation to a 'program' sized one. Then the Ministry Train will resume on **Saturday, September 19th**, noon to 2:00 pm to digest all we learned from the workshop with Rev. Douglas Taylor and begin to dream forward for UU Amherst. Contact Rev. Michelle if you'd like to be part of the conversation and strengthen the bonds of friendship and service at UU Amherst. Sign-ups for the potluck will be available in mid-August.

UU AMHERST GARDEN UPDATE

Perhaps you have noticed the beautiful green area to your right as you drive to the back parking lot and wondered what is going on there. Yes, it is a garden! It has many wonderful vegetables - peas, beans, tomatoes, cucumbers and so much more. There are even a few colorful flowers tucked in.

It was planted and is tended by our own UUA Vegetable Garden Group. We are a hardworking bunch of gardeners - some with much experience, others learning as we go. We are trying some different methods of planting such as "square foot gardening", companion planting, and growing things in succession to maximize our space and growing time.

Our goal is to harvest healthy and nutritious organic produce for the Little Free Pantry. We have already harvested many greens for salads and cooking, peas, and beets. We have also planted Cucamelons (that look like miniature watermelons) and ground cherries (that look like little lanterns with a surprise inside) to hopefully intrigue the children.

With the help of your much appreciated donations and the blessings of Mother Nature, there will be a bountiful harvest. We'd like to extend a special thanks to Sheryl Davies, Jill Fondiller, and Eric Groat for their many contributions to the garden.

Please stop by and look around, relax, take a deep breath, and take in the smell of basil or poke around in the foliage and discover a cucumber.

We are grateful to be able to do what we love in this space, and we thank you for your support.

If you are interested in joining us, contact Jill Fondiller.



ENDOWMENT TRUST

The Endowment Committee met in July and reviewed the 2nd Quarter 2026 numbers with our investment advisor. The value of the Trust as of 30-June was \$1,362,084. Our investment portfolio has returned 7.73% since the beginning of the year. Year to date, the (9) donations received into the Trust have totaled \$2,920.

The investment strategy we have in place is 60% Equities to 40% Fixed Income. We invest in ESG Index Funds (ESG = Environmental, Social, and Governance). These funds prioritize investments away from companies with a low score in terms of social responsibility issues. Interestingly, ESG portfolios have consistently performed as well or better in recent years than the total market funds.

The next quarterly meeting is Tuesday, October 13th at 6:00 pm. UU Amherst members are welcome to attend. Please contact me or another trustee in advance if you have a specific topic/question.

Please consider a gift to the UUCA Endowment Trust; either in the present to honor someone's special contributions or planned for the future as part of one's legacy estate.

-Eric Groat, on behalf of the Endowment Trustees: Ryan Inge, Barry Kent, Tamara Kofke, and Dian Tucker

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 simple and quick recipe with yummy results. Enjoy, Christine.

Key Lime Pie

Graham cracker crust
28 oz sweetened condensed milk
1/2 cup sour cream
3/4 cup key lime juice
Zest of 4 key limes or 2 regular limes (optional)
8 oz heavy whipping cream
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 tsp vanilla

You may make a crust from scratch or use a prepared one. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Bake the crust for 7 minutes and allow to cool. Baking the crust allows the slices to keep their shape when serving.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Whisk together the sweetened condensed milk, sour cream and lime juice. Add the zest, if using. Pour mixture into cooled crust and bake for 10 minutes. Cool.

Whip the whipping cream, sugar and vanilla until soft peaks form. Spread on pie and chill 3 hours.

You can either spend an hour juicing 60 key limes or buy the bottled juice, but do not use regular limes/juice because the taste is different.



UU AMHERST ONLINE STORE

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



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.

WNY UU PICNIC

You're invited to join
WNY Unitarian Universalist congregations
for a joint picnic on:

Saturday, August 22nd

12pm-3pm

@ UU Amherst
6320 Main St, Buffalo, NY 14221

BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH!

Instead of a potluck, we're asking everyone to bring
their own individual lunch. We'll have some small
snacks and light beverages available.

Chef Bruce
will be grilling
hot dogs and
burgers for
\$2 each!