

Issue

SEPTEMBER 2026

The Foreword

The Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst
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Office Hours Tues.—Fri. 9am to 2pm www.uuamherst.org



UU AMHERST

*Fostering Justice
and Compassion*

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Something new is afoot!

The Unitarian Universalist Association is rolling out a brand new thematic ministry tool that encompasses every area of congregational life: Woven Faith. UU Amherst has signed on to be a pilot congregation - to partake of the elements without charge this program year, as we 'test drive' what it means to fully live into the phrase that has guided my ministry here and at my previous congregation:

***Faith development is all we do. Unitarian
Universalism is the faith we teach. The
congregation is the curriculum.***

Each month there will be engaging opportunities for every age and stage of life - and not just in worship or faith development. There are units for covenant groups (small group ministry), justice advocacy, adult discussion groups, all-ages fellowship activities, relevant programs for ministry teams, committees, and the Board, as well as discussion prompts and activities that are centered in the inclusion of LGBTQIA2S+ and multicultural identities.

Clearly, this is a huge undertaking for the UUA and our feedback will be crucial for future programs. I hope that you will find multiple ways to engage the monthly themes as you grow your soul, connect together in faith and love, and discover more ways to live our hope-filled UU faith out loud!

Throughout the month of September we will focus on **Interdependence**.

Interdependently,
Rev. Michelle

(Rev. Michelle will be away 9/20-10/5)

Image design by Beth Taylor



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.*

Save the Date!

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

Rev. Douglas Taylor* from UU Binghamton will guide us through a workshop to prepare UU Amherst to consider the transition from pastoral-sized to program-sized congregation and all that means. If you are in leadership, have a hand in event planning (or want to), or are simply curious, put the date in your calendar. Sign-ups for the potluck are available at the Welcome Desk.

*Rev. Taylor has served UU Binghamton since 2003. He is a 4th generation Unitarian Universalist and the son of an ordained UU minister.



SEPTEMBER SERVICES SUNDAYS 10:30 AM

The theme is *Interdependence* and we'll weave threads of what it means to live interdependently throughout the month. *Interdependence* is one of the values that we lift up as Unitarian Universalists and that is central to our faith.

September 6 "The Fruit of Our Labor"

Rev. Michelle

September 13 "Gathered Again"

Rev. Michelle & Valerie Staats

Today is our Water Ingathering Celebration. Bring water from your travels or from your kitchen tap as we mingle our waters together.

September 20 "The Heart of Our Woven Faith"

Rev. Michelle

September 27 "A Unitarian Universalist Gospel of Inclusion"

Barry Zavah

Rev. Barry Abraham Zavah is an Ordained Priest of the Order of Melchizedek. An active UU subsequent to joining the Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst in 1981 until becoming an Alpine, Texas voting resident in March, 2008. Barry remains a good friend of our Church and leads the Saturday morning Shared Caring Zoom Circle.



BOARD REPORT

Opportunities for Growth and Creativity at UU Amherst

UU Amherst offers a wide range of activities that you may want to take advantage of, especially if you are a new member. At the service on August 15, Marlana Rice discussed how each of us can use our creativity and talent to build a stronger community.



- There are activities for **Action/Service** including Justice Advocacy, the Green Justice Group, our Clothing Ministry where we recycle gently used clothing, the Amherst Little Free Pantry and our Holiday Hope Gift Campaign.
- Activities that focus on **spiritual growth** include Faith Development for children and youth, which offers supportive and fun activities for children and teens. If singing brings you joy, our Sacred Singing circle meets on Sundays at 9:30 am in the Murray Meeting Room - no experience necessary. There are also a variety of small groups for adults including Sunrise Sessions (online), Covenant Groups, Soulful Conversations, Church of the Wild, and Villages (online groups that started during COVID). You can support Sunday worship by being a Worship Associate or perhaps a Worship Weaver who works behind the scenes to prepare the Chapel sanctuary for the service.
- **Musicians & audio/video tech support.** Connect with the Minister directly.
- Often members come together around a common interest in **Affinity Groups**. Currently we support a Book Group, Cultural Explorers and a Women's Group which meets for lunch on the first Tuesday of the month. Interested in Building and Grounds or technology? Check out the Campus Support group, the Technical Support Group, or the Website and Marketing Group.

You'll find a full list of activities in the lobby. There's also a form you can fill out to let us know what groups you may be interested in. We're looking forward to hearing from you!

–Ruth Bowen, Board Chair

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

September Blessing

From the star bellies to the plain bellies,
From the north-going to the south-going,
May we all be chappies who go on loving
Our Neighbors and friends,
Our foes and our furry beings,
As we, despite our belly embellishments,
Are all just love-filled bellied earthlings.

On this planet filled with McBeans,
We need to stay strong so we can love,
And oppose what we think is wrong.
But do so both in caution and care,
As we remember our values...
Because, sometimes, even a McBean,
deserves kindness from a love-bellied buffoon.

–Your DFD with gratitude to Dr. Seuss’ *Sneetches*

Curiosity Week Taking Place August 31st-September 4th

Please be aware that we will be utilizing various spaces during this week, including the Emerson Room, between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm. See the UU Amherst website calendar and *Weekly Update* for details.

Family Covenant Session

“Our congregational covenant is more than a poetic promise, it is a tool for creating personal and institutional resilience.” –Kim Diana Connolly

Following service on September 20th, all parents and caregivers are welcome and encouraged to join us for a session to continue the conversation around our congregational covenant, specifically in regard to families. We’ll be meeting in the Murray Meeting Room (the other side of the FD room). We’ll have childcare as well as snacks and cold drinks available.

Drumming Workshop for Beginners

Join congregant Elaine Krempholtz in a 4-session drum circle workshop for beginners on the following Fridays from 7-8:30 pm: Sept. 25, Oct. 9, Oct. 16 and Oct. 23. Please note that sessions are not held on consecutive Fridays.

The contribution for the 4-session workshop is \$20; if cost is a barrier for you but you would like to attend, discretionary funds are available; please email minister@uuamherst.org for more information.

Participants are expected to attend all 4 sessions. Limited spots and drums are available. We will be opening up RSVPs in early September so please watch the *Weekly Update* emails in the coming weeks for more information!

KC out of country

Please note I will be out of the country (with no access to cell service and limited access to email) from 9/24-10/2.

In community,
Katie Cosgrove (she/her)

AMHERST LITTLE FREE PANTRY

Because many activities happen on Sundays after service, ALFP is moving our monthly meetings to the second Wednesday of the month from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. We'll meet next on September 9 in the Library/Living Room.

Check elsewhere in this newsletter for information about donating to Harvest House's Annual Baby Shower Drive. The pantry will coordinate diaper donations during September. Sizes needed: Newborn, 4, 5, 6, and pull-ups (T2 to T5).

Save the Date! Saturday, October 10, the Witch Dance returns. Our Halloween-themed event will be a fundraiser with UU Amherst, including a trunk-or-treat at 4:00 pm (limit: 20 decorated vehicles). Our dancers and BeWitched Buffalo will perform at 4:45 pm, and weather-permitting, there will be a bonfire at 5:30 pm. Prizes for best costumes and trunk decor. Seasonal beverages will be available for purchase. Bring your own chair. *If you're interested in dancing with us, contact Meg Sabella. Practice is on Tuesdays at 6:00 pm, beginning August 25. The choreography is fairly simple. We'll do 2 routines alone and join BeWitched for "Shake Your Bacon."*

We are grateful to Peanut Butter and Jelly (Lockport HQ) for frequently providing products for our users. Through the end of July, they have given 300 jars each of peanut butter and spreads (including jelly, Nutella, and Fluff). Thanks to pantry volunteer, Judy Churchill, who communicates with the group and picks up the donations

–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 2 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!*) Andrew Ross Sorkin will be the first lecture in UB's 2026-27 Distinguished Speaker Series, on Friday, October 2nd. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster.

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 25th.

–Marie Evans

CULTURAL EXPLORERS

Did you know there's an Amherst Symphony Orchestra? Performances are free and open to the public. This year they will play at Williamsville South High School. Watch for information from Ruth Bowen about organizing groups to see the shows on October 25th and December 6th.

Theater Lovers will attend Jewish Repertory Theatre again this year. The first show, a drama titled *The Last Yiddish Speaker*, begins October 29th. More info coming in the fall.

SEPTEMBER 2026

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)

11:00 am: Leadership Dev & Nominating Comm EM
12:30 pm: Women's Group Lunch EM
2:00 pm: JAT Video Screening EM (weekly thru 9/29)

Wednesday, September 2nd

7:45 am: John Newman Mission (weekly-rental) MMR
4:00 pm: Amherst Little Free Pantry Meeting LR

Friday, September 4th

2:00 pm: JAT Video Screening EM (weekly thru 9/29)

Saturday, September 5th

10:00 am: Lace Guild (rental) MMR

Sunday, September 6th

12:00 pm: New 2UU Conversationl MMR
2:00 pm: Shamanic Journey (rental) BUL

Tuesday, September 8th

2:00 pm: JAT Video Screening EM (weekly thru 9/29)

Wednesday, September 9th

7:45 am: John Newman Mission (weekly-rental) MMR
4:00 pm: Amherst Little Free Pantry LR

Friday, September 10th

7:00 pm: Drumming Workshop EM

Saturday, September 12th

9:30 am: HBS Retreat (rental) LR
1:00 pm: Rainbow Cafe MMR

Sunday, September 13th

12:00 pm: Justice Advocacy Team Meeting LR

Tuesday, September 15th

2:00 pm: JAT Video Screening EM (weekly thru 9/29)
6:30 pm: Lace Guild (rental) MMR

Wednesday, September 16th

7:45 am: John Newman Mission (weekly-rental) MMR
6:00 pm: Finance Meeting MMR
7:30 pm: Board Meeting MMR

Friday, September 18th

5:30 pm: Ministry Train Workshop EM

CONTINUED

Saturday, September 19th

9:00 am: Firewall EM/CH
12:00 pm: Post-Workshop Meeting MMR
4:00 pm: Stroud Memorial Service CH/EM

Sunday, September 20th

11:45 am: Covenant Discussion for Families MMR
12:00 pm: Safety Task Group MMR
2:30 pm: Shamanic Journey (rental) LR
7:00 pm: Havurah CH (privacy requested)

Monday, September 21st

10:30 am: Havurah CH (privacy requested)

Tuesday, September 22nd

2:00 pm: JAT Video Screening EM (weekly thru 9/29)

Wednesday, September 23rd

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

Friday, September 25th

7:00 pm: Drumming Workshop EM

Saturday, September 26th

1:00 pm: Private Memorial Service/Recep CH/EM

Sunday, September 27th

12:00 pm: UU Amherst Book Group LR

Tuesday, September 29th

2:00 pm: JAT Video Screening EM

Wednesday, September 30th

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

RECURRING: SUNDAYS

Sundays, September 6th-27th

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, September 7th-28th

7:00 pm: Tulip Crabapples Zadmin (weekly)

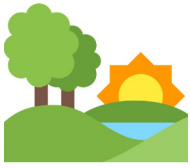
Wednesdays, September 2nd-29th

9/16 (3rd Wed)

7:00 pm: Northtowns Village Zoom

Saturdays, September 5th-26th

9:30 am: Sharing Circle Zadmin
7:00 pm: Birch Bunch Zadmin



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 September 1st in the Emerson Room at 12:30 pm. Bring your lunch and a beverage.

Memorial Service for Moragh Stroud

Saturday, September 19th

4:00 pm, reception to follow

Cards may be sent to:

David Stroud

50 Stahl Rd., Apt. 335

Getzville, NY 14068

NEW 2UU CONVERSATION Sunday, September 6th, 12-1:30 pm Murray Meeting Room

Are you fairly new to UU or to UU Amherst? Interested in knowing more about who we are and what UU is all about? You are invited to a New to UU conversation following the service on Sunday, Sept. 6th. We'll meet at noon in the Murray Meeting Room in the Faith Development area of the Administrative wing (off the lobby). Enjoy a quick cup of coffee in the Emerson Room after the service and then make your way to Murray.



Ministry Train Update

The Ministry Train is pulling into the station with a September 2-fer! On Friday, September 18th Rev. Douglas Taylor from UU Binghamton will offer a workshop for ministry team leads, the Board, and anyone else who is interested. Then we are resuming on Saturday, September 19th, noon to 2:00 pm for some conversation and planning as we digest all we learned from the workshop with Rev. Douglas Taylor the evening before,

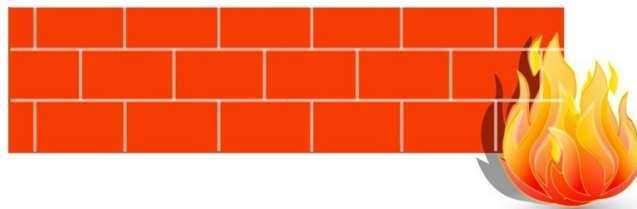
Contact Rev. Michelle (or just show up) if you'd like to be part of the conversation and strengthen the bonds of friendship and service at UU Amherst.

Firewall Meeting

Saturday, September 19 @ 9:00 am

Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst

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



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

UUAmherst Promises, Practice, and Repair

Last month, our August 2nd worship service, “Promises That Make Us,” gave us a chance to continue the conversation about covenant that has woven through so much of our last year. We explored a simple question: What kind of community are we co-creating at UUAmherst, and what promises help us become the people we hope to be?

We began in our Story for All Ages ... and continued into coffee hour, connecting the chain from the main service where adults added their own promises ... with a connected, colorful paper chain! We were reminded that while community is not a neat, straight line, we are connected in all sorts of lovely ways.

As part of our service, we cut ... THEN REPAIRED ... our chain! It was a reminder that even in communities grounded in love, connections sometimes break. Sometimes we misunderstand one another. We disagree. Someone feels hurt. We fail to live up to our promises. The important question is not whether this will happen, because it will. The important question is what we do next. Can we listen, repair, reconnect, learn, and perhaps even make the community stronger? I believe our covenant process can offer us a kind of pathway.



This fall, I look forward to working with our Board of Trustees and all of you on the final phase of renewing UUAmherst's Congregational Covenant, our shared expression of how we aspire to be together. We will also develop a companion guide for the harder moments: how we want to respond when promises are not kept, people experience hurt or harm, or relationships need repair. This will all be centered in love.

Our goal is a loving community ... but not a community without conflict. As I asked on August 2nd, I am posing this question to our community: What if UUAmherst became known, not because we never experienced conflict, but because everyone knew that when conflict inevitably came, it would be met with love, deep respect, compassion, and a shared commitment to reconnection and repair?

What if we were a community with the love, trust, accountability, and tools to help us find our way back to ourselves and one another?

–Kim Diana Connolly

Pollinator Groups

Are you ready to take a deeper dive into Unitarian Universalism and make more meaningful connections with fellow travelers on the journey? Sign up to participate in a Pollinator Group! The commitment is for just 3 months, after which the group can disband or decide to become a Covenant Group with a longer timeline. Scan the QR code below to indicate your interest OR sign up on the list at the Welcome Desk!



Harvest House
Wellness in Action
HARVEST HOUSE'S
4TH ANNUAL
BABY SHOWER
Drive ♥

UU Amherst's Ministry Train is collecting diaper donations during the month of September to support Harvest House's 4th Annual Baby Shower Drive, a community-wide effort to ensure Buffalo's youngest children have the essentials they need to grow, stay healthy, and thrive. 93% of poor families run out of diapers every quarter. Most needed sizes are Newborn, 4, 5, and 6 diapers, and 2T - 5T pull-up underwear.

Harvest House serves young families on Buffalo's East Side. In Buffalo, 65,000 children live in poverty (30,000 of them in extreme poverty) and over 50% of these children live on the East Side. The cost of baby essentials has risen 17% in the past year, while the cost of living (food, utilities, other essentials) has increased by 45%. Incomes are not keeping pace. Without enough basic care items, babies face higher risks of infection and illness. Mothers spending 40% or more of their income just to meet a baby's needs experience increased stress and depression.

A baby crib will be in the lobby on Sunday mornings for dropping off donations. Amherst Little Free Pantry will store the items in our office and members of John Newman Mission, a renter of our building, will transport them to Harvest House. To learn more about Harvest House, visit their website - harvesthousebuffalo.org



JUSTICE ADVOCACY GROUP

Have you been over yet to join the "Justice Advocacy Team at the U, Amherst" Facebook page? You will find there articles to read, protests to attend, petitions to sign, bills to watch, charities needing help, and anything else we use to send out in our Monday Updates. Please come check us out.

And don't forget to mark your calendars for the kick off for the return of Mindful Movies. Each Tuesday throughout September, we will show a segment of "The American Experiment", looking at the ideals of our founding fathers. Come join us at 2:00 pm Tuesdays in the Emerson Room for viewing and discussion afterwards. Then we return to the first Friday of each month, 7:00 pm, in October with the viewing of "All In: The Fight for Democracy." Hope to see you there.

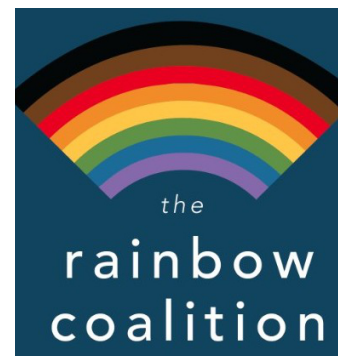
-Lauraine Marcus and Mark/Peggy Cook

RAINBOW COALITION

Rainbow Coalition had a great turn out for The Rainbow Cafe in August. Lots of food and fun was had with participants of all kinds. We also decided on themes for The Rainbow Cafe for the rest of the year while we were together. September is Last Sundae of Summer featuring ice cream sundaes, October is Halloween, November is Celebrating Indigenous Peoples, and December is Winter Holidays Afternoon Tea.

The Rainbow Cafe is a safe space for LGBTQIA2S+ people and allies to meet, eat, and socialize. The next Cafe will be held next on Saturday, September 12th, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm.

-April Starr



VOLUNTEERS: COFFEE OPPORTUNITY

- Fulfill basic congregational need!
- Perform sterling service for the UU Amherst
- Earn endless gratitude from some of the worthiest people in Western New York!
- Relieve the current aging coffee crew (serving since post-COVID reopening in 2022) – sustained currently only by excessive coffee consumption



Requirements

- Willing mind and body
- Available fairly regularly
- Setup presence from 10 – 10:30 am
- Occasional coffee service and clean up from 11:30 am – 12:30 pm
- Training on the job; written instructions available

How to get involved

- Stop in the kitchen and talk to the crew: Ron Palmere, Wendy Scott, Betty Crump
- Sign up on the Volunteer Spreadsheet (link in *Weekly Update*)

GREEN JUSTICE TEAM

Here are some upcoming Green Justice activities this fall:

September, 8, 7:30 pm. Zoom meeting for the Green Justice Team. The agenda, the link and other ID will be sent out as a reminder before that day.

Saturday, September 12. At UB South on Main and Bailey: Paint and battery collection from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. To view and register, go to <https://circular.eco/event/ubsouth2>. Sponsored by Erie County, Assembly Majority Leader Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes, The City of Buffalo & GreenSheen.

Thursday, October 8, 5:30 pm. Come to a soup and salad supper followed by environmental videos from the Homegrown National Park website, starting at 5:30 pm with videos at 6:30 pm.



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.

Fruit Sauces

This is time when fruits are so abundant. The urge to make cakes, pies, muffins, you name it makes sense when the farmer’s markets offer so much. But we have been doing something a little simpler. It’s almost irresistible to buy as many fruits as we can, but it’s truly more than we can consume or even share with family and friends. So, we make fruit sauces. These can be used with a variety of meats, on toast, over cake or ice cream, used in recipes, whatever you like.

The secret of making a delicious sauce is to be sparing with the sugar so that the flavor of the fruit stands out. So, start with about two cups of fruit and add 1/3 to 1/2 cup of sugar and about a tablespoon of lemon juice and about 1/2 cup of water and cook slowly on low heat for 20 to 30 minutes. Taste and add more sugar if too tart. Cool the sauce and store in the refrigerator. You can also freeze it for future use. It also makes a nice gift and it’s homemade!

Enjoy, Christine



UU AMHERST ONLINE STORE

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

