

Issue

August 2021

# The Foreword



**UU AMHERST**

*Fostering Justice  
and Compassion*

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](http://www.uuamherst.org)

## Our Staff:

### Minister

Rev. Michelle Buhite  
Office.....x102  
Cell....716-499-8343  
[minister@uuamherst.org](mailto:minister@uuamherst.org)

### Director of Faith Development

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### Caretaker

Chris Barry

### Finance Clerk

Camilla Lee.....x103  
[bookkeeper@uuamherst.org](mailto:bookkeeper@uuamherst.org)

### Office Administrator

Elaine Harrigan.....x101  
[administrator@uuamherst.org](mailto:administrator@uuamherst.org)

### Minister Emerita

Rev. Maureen Q. Thitchener

### MINISTER'S HOURS

Rev. Michelle continues to work primarily from home. She is just a call or email away, except for Mondays (off) and Fridays (writing & study).

## 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.*

## SUNDAY SERVICES AUGUST AT 10:30 AM

How exciting! This month is our transition back to in-person services. The first Sunday will still be online (only), so be sure to tune in to Rev. Renee's service. Beginning August 8th, we will be in-person, while still offering an online option. We will spend three weeks in an extended time of retreat and renewal as we mend what has been broken and move forward, speaking and singing with one voice. The month will close with the last offering in the Preaching by Parishioners program. Don't miss a moment!

### August 1 Minding Nature – Rev. Renee Ruchotzke

An exploration about how we might heal our relationships with each other and with the planet. Rev. Renee is our congregational life staff with the UUA, and has been a source of continued support to our church for the past 10+ years.

### August 8 “The Big Comeback 1: All We Touch, We Change”

Rev. Michelle  
We may look the way we did when we closed our doors to the pandemic in March 2020, but we are deeply changed by our individual journeys and our shared experiences.

### August 15 “The Big Comeback 2: Mending Fences, Healing Hearts”

Rev. Michelle  
In this time of pre-emergence from pandemic isolation, let us undertake the work of restoration and renewal.

### August 22 “The Big Comeback 3: Healthy Branches, Healthy Tree”

Rev. Michelle  
Pruning, tending, watering and fertilizing... How will we grow the tree that is our beloved community?

### August 29 Love and Motorcycles Scott Harrigan

What learning to ride a motorcycle teaches me about love. This service wraps up the summer series of Preaching by Parishioners offerings.



## MINISTER'S CORNER

Here we are at the cusp of a new church year. The business of church rumbles along from one fiscal year to another with just the turn of the calendar and a month or so to close the books on the past year and begin the next. But the life of church has a rhythm all its own. We may follow the same June ending and July beginning, but the life of the church has times of rest and renewal in preparation for greater activity. August may feel like a continuation of summer 'vacation' - but in the life of our community, it is a creative, restorative time of planning and designing moments of awe, opportunities for service, and co-creating beauty and sustenance in relationship with the Earth.

As Angela and I have been gazing at the future and UU Amherst's reopening, our shared commitment is for us to return mindfully - to reTURN the wheel of our life together. Our abrupt closure in March 2020 left many things undone, words of apology and reconnection unsaid, and frayed edges in the tapestry of our life together as a community of faith. I hope you will tune in during the month of August and participate in the mindful reTURNING of UU Amherst.

With care,  
Rev. Michelle

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### 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](mailto: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. '

### Don't forget to call your minister!

With health privacy laws, hospitals no longer call churches to let us know when someone has been hospitalized - so it is up to you to contact us if you or someone you know is experiencing health challenges and may want to be contacted. When in doubt, call! Rev. Michelle can be reached on her cell at 716-499



## Living Green Festival

**It's almost here!!!** We are moving forward with plans for a Living Green Expo, beginning 9/27 and running through 10/3. Planning and implementing this exciting event that invites the community to learn about living green - including alternative technologies like GOATS to eat invasive plant species - will take lots of planning in the coming months, as well as a sturdy crew of folks to implement. We will need all hands on deck! There are short-term and longer term projects - certainly something that will be a perfect fit for you! [Volunteers needed NOW!](#)

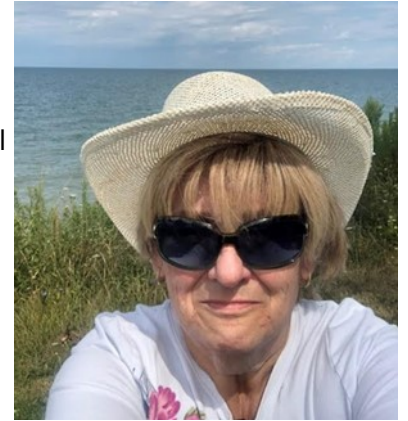
Contact Angela ([dfd@uuamherst.org](mailto:dfd@uuamherst.org)) or Rev. Michelle ([minister@uuamherst.org](mailto:minister@uuamherst.org)) to get on Team Green! Be ready to say YES when asked to participate!

Contact Angela ([dfd@uuamherst.org](mailto:dfd@uuamherst.org)) or Rev. Michelle ([minister@uuamherst.org](mailto:minister@uuamherst.org)) to get on Team Green!

## BOARD REPORT

Dear Members and Friends,

Greetings from Lake Ontario. It is so nice to be outside! I hope this finds you all happy and well. Our new Board of Trustees will be meeting on July 31<sup>st</sup>. We have yet to elect officers so we will need to share that next month or perhaps sooner in an email. Linda Gardner and Bruce Becker have joined us with Scott Harrigan and Wendy Scott completing their terms. The board has agreed that we have a lot of things going on and wish to improve how boards transition. In that vein, we have asked Scott and Wendy to stay on our email list and to continue on with their responsibilities with the 3 Foci. A special thank you to Scott and Wendy. The church is better for your gift of service!



Currently, I have been working on a technology grant for \$20,000 through the Chalice Lighters Program. There is a lot to this process! With all the needs to do hybrid services and other programs, we are looking at \$31,000 in potential costs. Keep your fingers crossed! We could be a state of art church and really move ourselves, our mission and Unitarian Universalism in the area forward!

If you are not yet a Chalice Lighter, please consider signing up. In order to have strong consideration for a grant, we need to have 20% of our members as Chalice Lighters and be an Honor congregation with the UUA. A Chalice Lighter is someone who volunteers to support the growth of Unitarian Universalism by pledging to support initiatives by member congregations. The call comes three times per year. You decide what that pledge of support will be.

We have a Chalice Lighter team. Cheryl Forell-Tomasulo and Eileen McCallister were our first volunteers and Marlana Rice, Wendy Scott, Ellen Moomaw and Yvonne Stocker round out our team our team. Thank you ladies! Wouldn't it be wonderful to lead and be over the 20%.

Rev. Michelle and the medical team will be writing about the re-opening. I will leave that to their very capable hands.

The facilities task force and a cross-section of our congregation met with the architects. The meeting, led by Jen Hill, was incredible. It was so good to hear that our members want our church to become a hub of the community. The possibilities are endless. Stay tuned to hear more and become involved. I think our investment in this firm is productive and we will make things happen when we have a phased in action plan. We are at the very early stages of the visioning.

The 3 Foci are continuing on. There has been a set back with the electrical feed needed for the sign. The task force is getting quotes and moving their project forward.

Living Green is actively working on the Living Green Celebration for the end of September. So many exciting things coming our way!

I cannot wait for us to be in person! I've missed seeing you all. For now, enjoy the beautiful (and sometimes rainy) weather and we will be together soon.

My best,

Karen Thompson  
On behalf of the UUAmherst  
Board of Trustees

## REMINDER: WHEN DONATING TO THE 3 FOCI

Please make your check payable to UUCA with a note in the memo line:  
3 foci. If donating online, select "Gift" and enter 3 foci in the box.  
Thank you for supporting this important work!

### Contributing to UU Amherst Through E-Giving

The church has implemented **THREE** ways to give electronically:

1. The **Giving** option on the church website (uamherst.org)
2. A NEW phone app "**GivePlus+**" for your phone
3. Texting a donation to phone # **833 987 1968**  
These methods complement the traditional methods:
4. Mailing a check [remember to fill in the Memo]
5. There is the traditional Sunday Plate (when you are in church)
6. Don't forget Legacy Giving – in your will

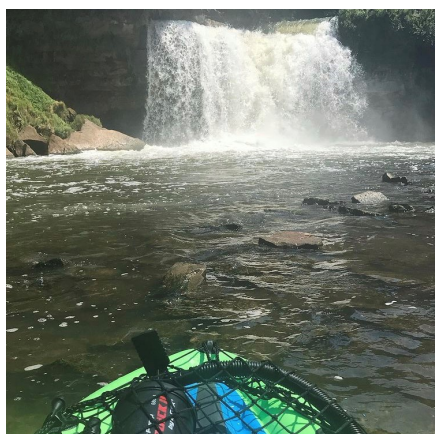


### Computer Technical Support for UU Amherst Members

Joce Kofke is our technical support person who will help you with computer issues—anything from how to get on Zoom to connecting your laptop to a printer. To set up an appointment, email them\* at tech@uamherst.org. If you don't have email, call Elaine in the

Business office at 634-3010 and she will provide Joce with your contact information.

\*Joce's pronouns are they/them



Office Administrator, Elaine Harrigan, is a kayaker who discovered this waterfall feature called Medina Falls at the end of a tributary from Glenwood Lake in Medina. She heartily recommends kayaking as a way to get close to nature while enjoying the many serene waterways of Western New York.

## Are You Enjoying a Summer "Break"?

The following is excerpted from UUA President Susan Frederick-Gray's June congregational message, "Take a break and find some joy":

"Rest is critical for the quality and sustainability of our work. And renewal requires more than simply not working. It takes positive energy to "recharge our batteries." It means pursuing activities that bring joy and spark our creativity and intellect in new ways. Hike through a national park. Putter in your garden. Try new recipes. Play games. Visit museums and amusement parks that are open again. Sit on the porch in a favorite chair with that pile of books you've been meaning to read.

In quiet moments, make space for the sadness and loss of these last months and rejoice in the blessings and successes. There remains much work ahead to nurture love and justice in our world. And I have faith that we will find ourselves renewed by taking time away from work. We will be reminded of our wholeness as human beings and our resiliency of spirit. And we can take stock of what has been. After a year and a half of guiding our communities through unprecedented times and learning to reinvent our work, we will again be ready to face the challenges and opportunities ahead."

## FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Dear UU Amherst members and friends,

How is your summer reading going? Are you going with the flow? Science fiction usually isn't my bag, but with the encouragement of both Rev. Michelle and adrienne maree brown, author of *Emergent Strategy*, I finally took the opportunity to read Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* while I was away last month. Within this dystopian masterpiece, the religion of the main character, Lauren Oya Olamina emerges through the subtext of *Earthseed : The Books of the Living*. The main premise may sound familiar, as it has been woven into writings and Sunday services here at UU Amherst:



All that you touch you Change.

All that you Change, Changes you.

The only lasting Truth is Change.

God is Change.

Interesting that the night before I picked up *Emergent Strategy*, I was musing in my own journal about how everyone is everyone's teacher. brown agrees. This is the main premise of her organizing. This truth is not for humans alone. We can also learn from the Changes and emergence of our non-human friends, both flora and fauna. We observe and take part in this constant flow of Change. This God of Change.

Then the flow took me back to a paper written for the New England Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association in 2017 by Kimberly Sweeny called "The Death of Sunday School." This sounds scary, but death is scary when you aren't willing to prepare for it. From Sweeney's summary: "Paying attention to the shifting needs of our families and children, releasing ourselves from the structures of our past, and boldly experimenting to contribute to the evolution of faith formation may just be the spiritual task of our time." And this, "In our UU tradition, bridging out of the youth ministry program essentially meant bridging out of church." Aren't we always asking ourselves, where are the young people? Yet, we have not cultivated the community in a whole way. The young and old have been separated for far too long. Rev. Michelle has been encouraging this congregation to find our WHY. This reTURNing provides us with the opportunity for Change, where we truly foster and cultivate compassion for one another and for the wider community. This is why Social Justice, Food Justice, Environmental and Racial Justice must be our WHY! The work of the church as a whole is to be the framework where Justice nestles. Otherwise, what for? We are here, in this place, not to just observe, but to be immersed and to engage and enrich one another so that we can become the makers of Good Trouble. Let's get back to our countercultural roots.

As we reTURN to church this month and we touch each other for real (!) in person (!) we have the opportunity to embrace Change as we embrace one another. We can embrace our place on Earth at UU Amherst. We open ourselves to Change. We grow with Change. We are a people who can embrace this growth, heal together, and teach one another. ALL of us, the young and the old, can become a welcoming space, a church that welcomes radically, and includes everyone.

In faith,  
Angela Warren, DFD

## AUGUST CALENDAR

**PLEASE NOTE:** As the church begins to expand into both online in and in-person events, we will continue to identify those events which are Zoom only and those that are taking place at the church—primarily outdoors. Zoom links for general church groups are published in the Weekly Update unless they are hosted on a private account. **If you want to join a Zoom meeting that is hosted by an individual and haven't received a link, please contact the meeting host. Their names are listed for each meeting. \*require passcode**

**Sunday, August 1** (monthly 1st Sun)  
**12:00 pm:** Food Pantry Meeting Zadmin

**Sunday, August 8** (monthly 2nd Sun)  
**12:00 pm:** Poetry as Practice

**Thursday, August 12** (monthly 2nd Thu)  
**7:00 pm:** Kent Covenant Group Zadmin

**Friday, August 13-Sunday, August 15:**  
FD Team Retreat Times TBA

**Tuesday, August 17** (monthly 3rd Tue)  
**1:30 pm:** Caring Committee (R. Palmere)  
**7:00 pm:** Green Justice Team Zfd

**Wednesday, August 18** (monthly 3rd Wed)  
**5:00 pm:** Finance Committee  
**7:00 pm:** Bofinger Covenant Group (D. Bofinger)

**Thursday, August 19** (monthly 3rd Thu)  
**7:00 pm:** Ministry Council Zrev

### RECURRING:

**UU Universe-ity Sunrise Sessions continue**  
**M-F, 8:30 am** Zfd Link provided in Weekly Update

**Saturdays, August 7-28**  
**9:00 am:** Outdoor Education/Work Day see schedule in Weekly Update (church grounds)  
**9:30 am:** Shared Caring Circle Zrev  
**11:00 am:** Needle Arts Zoom (8/14 & 8/28)\* Zfd  
**7:00 pm:** Birch Bunch\* Zadmin (weekly) V. Snider

**Sundays, August 1-29**  
**10:30:** Church service—**Online & in-person** (join via UUAmherst website link or UU Amherst YouTube channel)  
**10:30 am:** Watch Party/Service — Zoom/in-person  
**6:30 pm:** Young Adult D. Bofinger

**Mondays, August 2-30**  
**7:00 pm:** Lighthearted Larches (8/2, 8/16 & 8/30)  
D. Tucker  
**7:00 pm:** Tulip Crabapple\* Zadmin (weekly)  
L. Marcus  
**7:30 pm:** Marvelous Maples (8/2, 8/16 & 8/30)  
D. Bofinger

**Tuesdays, August 3-31**  
**12:30 pm:** Women's Group\* Zadmin (weekly)

**Wednesdays, August 4-25**  
**10:30 am:** Willow Village\* Zadmin (2nd & 4th Weds: 8/11 & 8/25) J. Senders  
**12:00 pm** Brown Bag Lunch on the Patio  
**7:00 pm:** Sage Circle\* Zfd (2nd & 4th Weds: 7/14 & 7/28)  
**7:00 pm:** Northtowns Village (8/18) Y. Stocker

**Thursdays, July 8-29**  
**12:00 pm:** Lunch with Friends\* Zadmin (weekly)

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### Saturday Morning Shared Caring Circle

Hosted by participants  
Every Saturday at 9:30 am on Zoom  
(30 minutes)

See Zoom link in the Weekly Update.

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### Note about outdoor gatherings

If your group is using the patio furniture, please be sure to restore the tables and chairs to where they belong and not leave on the grass.

### 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 list serve: 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**

## ENDOWMENT TRUST

Thank you to all of our generous donors!

Remember, you can donate directly by check sent to the church address or electronically through E-giving links on the church website [uuamherst.org/wp2/donate-2/](http://uuamherst.org/wp2/donate-2/). Donations are frequently made in memory of church members or to honor a special occasion. Please indicate in the memo line of a check if the donation is a tribute.

If you use Amazon for shopping, entering the site through Amazon Smile [smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/homepage?orig=%2F](https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/homepage?orig=%2F) gives you the opportunity to choose Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst Endowment Trust as beneficiary. "Same products, same prices, same service. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases."

As of June 30, the close of the church fiscal year (and end of 2nd financial quarter of 2021), Endowment's investment portfolio was worth \$1,122,639, and we had \$5,055.92 in our checking account, for a total value of \$1,127,694.92.

- Marie Evans, Chair, for Trustees Joe Rautenstrauch, Elaine Cusker, Lauraine Marcus, and John Thompson

## FACILITIES TASK FORCE

Brainstorm session with Wendel Architects team July 14, 2021

The congregation voted in June to fund a thorough assessment of church property in preparation for proposals to repair, restore, and replace the UUCA church property. Here is what's happening. On 7/14 the extended Facilities Task Force met with Wendel Architects to discuss current and future facilities usage. The session was led by Jennifer Hill, the project manager from Wendel. The purpose was to examine ideas and thoughts for the Space Utilization Study, part of the assessment Wendel is doing of the state of the church property. Many topics were raised as being important, from current issues to future possibilities. The architect team will assemble all the information and the task force will bring it to the whole congregation for consideration later in the year. Change is in the air and all the possibilities are exciting, but these large projects move slowly; however, progress is being made. —Wendy Scott

## UU AMHERST BOOK CLUB

UU Amherst Book Club is on hiatus for the summer. The June meeting was cancelled due to a scheduling conflict with virtual programming from UUA General Assembly. We meet again Sunday, September 26, in-person at church at Noon, when we will discuss books each participant has read on the topic MYSTERIES, and choose a common read book for October.

- Marie Evans and Grace Little



 UUA.ORG/IMAGES

**Shakespeare in Delaware Park** is performing in various locations through the end of August. See [shakespeareindelawarepark.org/shakespeare-love](http://shakespeareindelawarepark.org/shakespeare-love) for dates and locations of their touring show, Shakespeare & Love. Unfortunately, A Midsummer Night's Walk, where you move between scenes in Delaware Park, appears to be sold out.

**Artpark**, for those who would enjoy a drive to Lewiston, has a variety of activities happening through the summer, including five unique, self-guided "Sonic Trails", music-based walking tours, available as an app for Apple or Android phones. Information at [www.artpark.net](http://www.artpark.net).

Many performance companies are planning in-person seasons this year. Visit their individual websites for information; links are available on Theatre Alliance of Buffalo's site: [www.theatreallianceofbuffalo.com](http://www.theatreallianceofbuffalo.com).

I also encourage you to listen to Theater Talk: Anthony Chase and Peter Hall talk about what's happening at area theaters, Friday mornings at 6:30 & 8:30 during Morning Edition on WBFO radio 88.7 FM. It's available for on-demand listening on WBFO's website at [www.wbfo.org/arts-culture](http://www.wbfo.org/arts-culture) and on the WBFO Brief podcast. As of this writing (mid-July), there's no information yet on when, where, or how Curtain Up!, the annual gala kick-off for the Buffalo theater season, will be happening. Check the website [tda-wny.com](http://tda-wny.com) (Theatre District Association) for updates.

This fall, we will resume group outings to Jewish Repertory Theatre shows. Here's a preview from Adam Yellen, Director of Performing Arts: "Along with [last season's staged reading] productions we were able to conduct interviews with all five playwrights involved in our season, all of which are still available to view on the JCC Buffalo YouTube page.

Nothing can replace the experience of live theater. Following a 15 month absence of live shows and programming, JRT is proud to announce a return to the stage for our three play 2021-2022 season, all performed live in-person at the Robert and Maxine Sellers Theatre at the Jewish Community Center Bender-son Family Building."

The first production this season will be "Photograph 51" by Anna Ziegler, running October 21- November 14. It's the story of Rosalind Franklin, one of the great female scientists of the twentieth century. In September, I'll provide details for a group outing for the show and dinner.



### Chautauqua 2021

The Chautauqua Season continues! Many of the lectures and performances are being presented in new ways to address safe social distancing measures. Information is available at [chq.org](http://chq.org), but it's recommended that you

join their email list to receive up-to-date notification of changes.

**UU's may be particularly interested in attending Monday, August 2 at 1:00 pm when author and public theologian, Brian McLaren will be on hand.** If you have a gate pass, you can attend the event for free but seats must be pre-reserved. Otherwise, to attend just the lecture, you need to purchase a ticket for \$15 on the new ticketing page at [tickets.chq.org](http://tickets.chq.org).

The remaining summer schedule is available on their website @[chq.org](http://chq.org).



Just a reminder that Bob & Kathy Wack's granddaughter, Mariel Gousios, is collecting bottles and cans and donating the proceeds to the Pantry. Refund containers are now placed near the composit bins for CLEAN bottle and cans. Mariel has offered to pick up members' bottles & cans from their residences. If nterested, contact her at [refundthepantry@gmail.com](mailto:refundthepantry@gmail.com).



## COVID CORNER

Well, Covid Cases are on the rise in Western New York, mostly due to the Delta variant and unvaccinated individuals. If you are vaccinated, you may still get the Covid virus but you are unlikely to die from it (Isn't that nice to know?). You may or may not get sick with it. We still aren't sure if the virus is transmitted from a vaccinated individual to another human. With this in mind, your UUCA leadership has decided to move forward with reopening in August with masks inside and a social hour without food or drinks. A hybrid model will be used for the foreseeable future so you can attend church remotely if you so desire. We will continue to monitor the local Covid situation and make decisions to keep our community safe. This is a very fluid situation and we may decide to follow a more restrictive path than the local, state, or federal Governments. We are doing our best to keep you safe. Embrace your face covering and check the UUCA Covid requirements before arriving at church.



—Barbara Gauger Kent

## AMHERST LITTLE FREE PANTRY

**PANTRY NEEDS:** [PAPER or PLASTIC PACKAGING ONLY, no glass, no fresh food]

Here's what we have trouble keeping in stock lately:

Peanut butter (have plenty of jelly)

Chef Boyardee canned pasta

Juice, especially 8-12 oz plastic bottles

Pasta sauce (plastic jars or cans only, please!)

Granola bars

Baby and toddler foods

Canned chicken, salmon, sardines, corned beef

Non-standard canned vegetables such as mushrooms, beets, yams

Dish detergent

Deodorant

Shampoo

Diapers in size 4 or 5

Pet food



THANK YOU to everyone who donates supplies or funds!

Food donations can be placed in the two large clear bins in the back of the church outside the main entrance. Financial contributions can be made online at the church website, [uuamherst.org](http://uuamherst.org), by clicking the Donate button and selecting the Pantry option. Checks can also be sent to UUCA, 6320 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221. Please write "Pantry" in the Memo line.

For questions or comments please email [amherstlittlefreepantry@uuamherst.org](mailto:amherstlittlefreepantry@uuamherst.org).

Like us on Facebook: [amherstlittlefreepantry](https://www.facebook.com/amherstlittlefreepantry).

## 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 group. They provide occasional meals to church members on an as-needed basis. With the meal they generally include a “goodie bag” and a card on behalf of the Caring Group. They often submit healthy recipes for the monthly *Foreword*. The recipes are easy and usually use fresh vegetables.

Here are two recipes that are simple to do, can save you money and enhance your cooking.

### Fish Stew

Preparation time 2 hours. Serves four.

- 1/4 tsp each of cinnamon and ground mace
- 1/2 tsp each of ground turmeric, ginger, hot smoke paprika and cumin
- 1 large sweet potato
- A small bunch of cilantro
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, roughly chopped
- 1 orange
- 2 fat cloves of garlic peeled
- 1 tsp finely grated ginger
- 1 28 oz. can of diced tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp flaky sea salt or 1/2 tsp fine sea salt
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup
- 1 1/2 lbs of skinless, firm white fish cut in 1 thick piece (eg., halibut, grouper, sea bass)



Measure all spices into a small bowl. Peel and cut sweet potato in 1/2 inch dice and set aside. Chop cilantro to make 3Tbsp. Warm oil in a heavy base pan or Dutch oven. Add onion and cook gently until beginning to soften. Finely grate orange zest and garlic, add chopped cilantro and grated fresh ginger. Stir over gentle heat; add spices.

Add diced sweet potato and stir over medium heat for a minute or so. Add canned tomatoes and 1 2/3 cups water. Add tomato paste, honey or syrup, salt and 1 Tbsp orange juice. Stir well.

Turn up the heat to bring to a boil, then put on lid and turn heat down to a simmer for 40-45 minutes until the sweet potato is completely soft and the sauce has thickened slightly.

Cut fish into large bite sized pieces and place in sauce. Cook 3-5 minutes until fish is fully cooked. Remove from heat, sprinkle with cilantro leaves and serve. Rice is a good base to spoon the stew over. Crusty bread is a tasty accompaniment.

## RETURN TO SERVICES

Your church medical response task force met on June 30 to consider next steps for reopening UU Amherst. These recommendations have been REVISED since published via email on 7/7.

Unless things change significantly regarding Covid cases (including the Delta variant) in Erie County, the church will reopen for Sunday services on Sunday, August 8th. Coffee hour will NOT be observed.



Congregation Havurah and individual one-time renters (weddings and memorials) may proceed with services, pending waivers and agreements processed through the church office. Church groups (team and committee meetings, covenant groups, etc.) may meet at church beginning August 1st, with times being reserved through the church office. The doors will remain locked and will only be opened for scheduled meetings. Drop-in support groups will not be considered at this time.

**Masks/face coverings are mandatory, regardless of vaccination status.** This is for everyone's safety and is in compliance with best practices. As always, these measures are contingent upon New York State and Erie County guidelines and may be reevaluated if there is a significant change in local Covid cases.

### **Additional thoughts:**

At the moment we do not have all details worked out with regarding to programming for children and youth, what hybrid services will look like, etc. If you have questions regarding anything not listed in the above announcement, it's not been worked out yet! Angela and I are taking some time off this month and will let you know when we have more details.

Let me underscore the importance of scheduling your group's meetings with the office staff. The church will not be universally unlocked, as in the past. You must schedule any meetings that you wish to hold inside the building, and it would be a courtesy to do so even for outside gatherings so that the staff can be helpful to those who make inquiries.

Please remember that our small and mighty staff have been working in a fortress of solitude for 17 months. Please be patient and extend grace as they gear up for the Big Return. Elaine is in the office Tuesday-Friday, 9:00 am-2:00 pm. That is the only time that she gets your phone calls or reads your email. If you send an inquiry late Friday afternoon, you will not have any response before mid-morning the following Tuesday, at the earliest.

Be flexible. Say thank-you, heartily and often. Extend grace to yourself and others. Say 'yes' when asked to serve. Remember how blessed we are to be able to return, and stay connected with those who will need to remain at home. We are making a whole new church out of the cloth we have woven these past years. Be well. Take care. If all goes to plan, we will see one another soon.

Rev. Michelle



**UU AMHERST**

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH OF AMHERST

*Fostering Justice and Compassion*

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