

Issue

December 2021

The Foreword



UU AMHERST

*Fostering Justice
and Compassion*

The Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst
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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 DECEMBER AT 10:30 AM

REMINDER: 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.

This month we lift up and engage what it means to open to Joy. Sometimes happiness seems out of reach, much less JOY. What does it mean for us to be a people of faith who open ourselves to Joy?

December 5 Growing Our Gardens, Growing Ourselves Petra Page-Mann, Guest Speaker

What if our gardens grow us more than we grow them? Join us for an invitation to cultivate so much more than carrots and harvest so much more than calories, amplifying the beauty and abundance of us all for generations to come. (See page 2 for bio.)

December 12 Opening to Joy

“Joy comes to us in moments - ordinary moments.” (Brené Brown)
Let’s risk our hearts and open ourselves to ordinary joy.

December 19 Calling Forth the Light - A Solstice Service

Celebrate the rebirth of the light as we honor the Winter Solstice.

December 24 Christmas Eve Services

11:00 am: In-person service and ornament exchange (see additional information on page 2.)

9:00 pm: Virtual candlelight service (30 minutes), with Zoom watch party.

December 26 Virtual Service Only. No in-person worship.

As the holiday festivities wind down, we’ll make room for comfort and joy. A Zoom watch party will be offered at 10:30 am. Watch for the link.



MINISTER'S CORNER

Hello Friends,

I have a strange confession... Joy gives me a headache. Do you experience this? I'm not sure what to make of it - the exuberance that moves from a big smile to a dull throb in my head. I think it is some kind of early warning system for a level of happiness that is ultimately unsustainable. Joy is deeper than momentary giddy feelings, although those moments are a treasure.

To open ourselves to joy requires risking our hearts, letting love in and offering our love to others. Opening ourselves to joy means recognizing that all the makings for joy are everywhere and we need simply to be open to them. It is my hope that you will discover within you the sustaining joy that eases sorrow, soothes anxiety and pain, and reminds you that you are worthy and loved beyond measure. May the light of joy hold you and keep you, in this season and always.

Warmly,
Rev. Michelle

About Petra Page-Mann (from page 1, Sunday service, December 5th)

Growing up in her father's garden, Petra believes each seed and each of us is in the world to change the world. Her passion, curiosity, love of food and love of people led her all over the world studying seed, song and culture worth celebrating. In 2012 she founded Fruition Seeds to share the seeds, knowledge and inspiration gardeners need to be more successful in the Northeast, as well as build a culture of curiosity and care centering seeds of both resilience and justice. If she's not farming she is singing, skiing, snuggling her dogs, hunting mushrooms or sharing a feast with a friend.

Calling All Pagan-Leaning Folk!

Your help is needed to create and offer the Solstice service on 12/19. Contact Rev. Michelle by 12/5 to be part of the service and planning!

Christmas Eve Gatherings

It's our second winter holiday season under Covid restrictions and we are exercising the creativity centers in our brains to offer safe and meaningful opportunities to gather in person and virtually. You are welcome to attend either or both of these Christmas Eve offerings, as your schedule allows.

At 11:00 am we will gather at church to celebrate our community and the rebirth of hope. As part of our time together, we'll engage in an ornament exchange, preferably an ornament that is already in your collection and ready to be passed to someone else. Like the give-away table following the Braiding Sweetgrass service, the ornaments will be freely offered and gratefully received, trusting that the right ornament and the right person will find one another. Extra ornaments will be available so that all may participate.

At 9:00 pm we will gather virtually via Zoom for thirty minutes of reflection, music, and candle lighting. The Zoom link will be sent in the week leading up to December 24th.

December Share-the-Plate

Throughout the month of December, including our traditional Christmas Eve offering, we will share the offering with **Buffalo United for Afghan Evacuees**, a community coalition that includes Jericho Road, Journey's End, Catholic Charities, Jewish Family Services, and the International Institute of Buffalo. You can give on Sundays, online, or send a check to the church office. Checks should be made out to UU Amherst with "United" in the memo line. Learn more about their important ministry on their website, <https://www.wnyrac.org/>.

BOARD REPORT

Dear Friends,

Happy Gratitude day! I want to take this opportunity to thank our staff, board and the many volunteers that make UU Amherst the beloved community it is. We are blessed.

UU Amherst has been very fortunate to receive the Chalice Lighter's Grant for \$20,000 to update our technology and expand our hybrid programs. Our team is working hard to bring professional hybrid services to us and the larger community. Les Buhite and Andy Andersen have been the driving forces behind this. The next step will be improved lighting and upgrading the screens in the sanctuary.



We are in the process of implementing the next phase of our technology plan. Joce Kofke is the lead on this phase. Joce is currently setting up a member, who is in a long-term care facility, with an i-pad and is tutoring this senior on how to use it and how to access church programs. We will be purchasing four i-pads with an account for internet access. If you know of anyone who is currently disconnected from the church services because of technology, please let Elaine Harrigan, Joce Kofke or myself know. The way this will work is the person will be loaned the equipment and tutored on the how to's. Then they can choose to purchase one and have it set up and then the next person who would like the same level of tech support will be given the same opportunity and support.

The facilities focus group will be having a meeting with Jen Hill and the architects from Wendel. After this meeting, the team will be reaching out to the congregation for guidance. There is much to be excited about!

The Finance Committee has been working hard. They are exploring and interviewing financial advisors (brokerages) to create a smooth method for our members to donate stock or money from their mandatory retirement distributions directly without paying taxes on the sale of stock or a distribution from an IRA. Of course, one should always consult their own financial advisor on the mechanics of this. The Committee has recommended to the Board going back to the Calendar year versus the July 1-June 30th church year. Stayed tuned as we will need to do a congregational vote on this at the annual meeting. They have also recommended creating a capital reserve fund for building repair and projects. Honestly, we should have done this long ago. The recommendation is to put 5% of our annual budget in the reserve. By doing this and hiring a brokerage to handle our account, we can invest and get a higher return than a savings account. The Committee has also recommended increasing rents across the board by 10%. We need good financial planning in order to do what is needed to create the church buildings to be efficient, green and accessible to all.

The three Foci are still in process. Admittedly it is taking longer than we had anticipated. Rest assured that donations can only be spent on these projects. As mentioned in the last newsletter, the sign project has been delayed due to logistics regarding the electric source. Additionally, it was discovered in the facilities review that our electric service is insufficient for the demands we put on it. The costs may be absorbed in the long-term facilities project. There also needs to be meetings with the town and permits to acquire. The facilities portion has begun with an in-depth study of our physical plant and mechanics. Currently we have invested \$30,000+ in this necessary work. Along with that, we have spent \$5,500 to repair and construct proper drainage near the daycare. The green team saw the goats come and clear an area in the ecology center. The festival has been postponed because of COVID.

Continued on next page

Board report continued

People have mentioned how disheartened they are they we have not had coffee hour. On so many levels, I understand and feel the same way. Erie County has the highest infection rate in New York State **at 8%**. Friends, we have a wonderful medical team that is guiding us. That increase keeps us at bay. As soon as the medical team gives us the go ahead, the coffee will flow and friends will come together. Until then, we must be responsible for the well-being of our members and friends. Your board wants to bring us all together, too.

Remember that the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 is talk back Tuesday with the board. This is your opportunity to have coffee and have an informal chat with board members and friends. The link always comes in an all-church email. Please join us in talking about our church, joys and sorrows and your dreams and aspirations for the future.

A few board members attended a three-month training on being a church board. It was clear to me that we are being proactive and are in "better shape" than many of our sister congregations. Thank you for supporting the church and staying connected. We are doing well in spite of current restrictions. Your patience will make it better for all of us.

This edition is the December newsletter. We are still working on the Christmas season events. Much will depend on the medical team and news from the Erie County Health Department. Rev. Michelle will be keeping us informed as the holidays get closer.

As we enter this time of gratitude and celebration, I wish you the warmth of loving family and friends, creating new memories that bring you joy and most of all a peaceful heart during these turbulent times. Happy holidays!

In shared faith,
Karen Thompson, Chair
On behalf of the
UU Amherst Board of Trustees



Karen Thompson



Don Tucker



Bruce Becker



Linda Gardner



Emily Garrett



Laurie Kasnicki



Jeanine Moyer

COMMITTEE ON MISSION

We are very pleased to announce that our collaboration with The Caring For One Another team is completed. The Caring team originated their mission statement:

"The Caring For One Another Team's Mission Statement is to recognize and support our beloved community and to assist our community in maintaining its connection to our church"

Additionally, the Caring Team formulated six measurable goals to reflect the tasks they perform. We are grateful to the Caring team for their dedication to our church community and their cooperation with CoM to accomplish this three month task of creativity.

The next endeavor for CoM is to introduce "Calling the Circle Way" of communication to our Board of Trustees in January or February of the coming 2022 year.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Christ, CoM Chair

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Dear UU Amherst members and friends,

What does it mean to be a community that opens to Joy? This familiar doxology may inform us:

***From all that dwells below the skies,
Let faith and hope and joy arise,
Let beauty, truth, and good be sung,
Through every land by every tongue.***

The tune comes from the 16th Century Genevan Psalter created under the supervision of John Calvin. Even though I find it ironic that someone who preached fire and brimstone and individual salvation would espouse the communal singing of the Psalms, I can appreciate that the hymn's origin came from the practice of singing Psalm 100 in the Calvinist tradition. As "The Old One Hundredth" it has gone through many iterations within Unitarian Universalism, and appears in our hymnal "Singing the Living Tradition" as Nos. 370 to 381.

Every single week that we meet in our Sanctuary for Sunday services, I miss our joyful communal singing more and more. We are a people who center the safety of our fellow congregants and newcomers of all ages, and to refrain from singing is a sacrifice we make. My friends, I intensely miss the Joy of singing in the moment as we gather in beloved community. In person. In our Sanctuary.

In the version of the Old One Hundredth that we are most familiar with, Joy is part of a trinity; it is included with Faith and Hope. Joy seems the most fleeting and elusive of the three legs of this stool. As if without the strongholds of Faith and Hope, it couldn't stand, it wouldn't be able to emerge. Isn't Joy momentary? Is it over when we finish the song, or when we can't sing? Maybe, but Faith and Hope tell us that it will come back around.

Right now, in this moment, on the page where my words have the potential to reach the greatest number of people in this beloved community, I would like to affirm that Joy will always come back around if we make room for it with our Faith and Hope. Right now, this might be very difficult for you to affirm, as we move into a holiday season filled with sustained uncertainty. We're just on Thanksgiving. What will the end of December bring? How do we usher in Joy at the outset of the upcoming New Year?

We usher in Joy by holding on to the Faith and Hope that what we have learned in this immediate past is capable of helping us sustain our relationships, even if we can't sing or be together in person. May all the possible moments of Joy come to you and yours these upcoming Holy Days.

In Faith, Hope, and Joy,
Angela Warren, UU Amherst Director of Faith Development
Angela's days off are now Monday and Friday



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. '

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 716-499-8343.

DECEMBER 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. Zoom links for general church groups are published in the Weekly Update unless they are hosted on a private account. **Those events taking place in person will have the room identified after the event. MASKS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL ATTENDING IN-PERSON MEETINGS REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS.**

***require passcode**

Friday, Dec 3 (monthly 1st Fri)
7:30 pm: Adult Story Hour Zrev

Sunday, Dec 5
11:30 am: All Church FD Activity: Wreath making
After service, **Emerson**

Tuesday, Dec 7 (monthly 1st Tues)
7:00 pm: Talk Back with Board

Wednesday, Dec 8
1:30 pm: Caring Team LR
7:00 pm: Covenant Group - In person LR

Thursday, Dec 9 (monthly 2nd Thu)
7:00 pm: Kent Covenant Group Zadmin

Sunday, Dec 12 (monthly 2nd Sun)
11:30 am: Poetry as Practice **Reeb & Zoom**
D. Bofinger

Tuesday, Dec 14 (monthly 2nd Tues)
7:00 pm: Board Meeting **EM**

Wednesday, Dec 15 (monthly 3rd Wed)
1:00 pm: 3rd Wednesday Covenant Group Zoom Zrev
5:00 pm: Finance Committee
7:00 pm: Bofinger Covenant Group D. Bofinger

Thursday, Dec 16 (monthly 3rd Thu)
7:00 pm: Ministry Council Zrev

Sunday, Dec 19 *
12:00 pm UU Amherst Book Group **LR**
***This month only—typically 4th Sunday**

Tuesday, Dec 21 (monthly 3rd Tue)
7:00 pm: Green Justice Team Zfd

Continued

RECURRING:

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

Wednesdays, Dec 1-29
10:30 am: Willow Village* Zadmin (2nd & 4th Weds: 12/8 & 12/22 J. Senders
12:30 pm: Outdoor Education/Work Day—continues as weather permits
7:00 pm: Sage Circle* Zfd (2nd & 4th Weds: 12/8 & 12/22) S. Christ
7:00 pm: Northtowns Village (12/15)

Thursdays, Dec 2-30
12:00 pm: Lunch with Friends* Zadmin (weekly)

Saturdays, Dec 4-25
9:30 am: Shared Caring Circle Zrev
7:00 pm: Birch Bunch* Zadmin (weekly)
V. Snider

Sundays, Dec 5-26
10:30: Church service—in-person or watch service on UU Amherst YouTube channel
6:30 pm: Young Adult D. Bofinger

Mondays, Dec 6-27
7:00 pm: Lighthearted Larches (12/6 & 12/20)
D. Tucker
7:00 pm: Tulip Crabapple* Zadmin (weekly)
L. Marcus
7:30 pm: Marvelous Maples (12/6 & 12/20)
D. Bofinger

Tuesdays, Dec 7-28
12:30 pm: Women's Group Lunch — Zoom except for 2nd Tues, 12/14 in **LR & DR**

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



BECOME A CHALICE LIGHTER

A chalice lighter responds to three calls a year for contributions that are pooled to fund special grants for UU churches in the Central East Region (CER). Contributions can be in any amount-\$20 or more per call

is recommended, but whatever you can afford will be thankfully accepted. As our congregation is receiving a grant of \$20,000 to upgrade our technology, you can see how your contributions are valuable. Helping neighboring congregations to realize their dreams is a splendid way to cooperatively grow the faith. To sign up just go on line to: www.uua.org/central:east/programs/chalichelighters/cerclsignup



Maria's ready for football season! Thanks to Ron Palmere for sending this photo of Maria Ceraulo wearing an authentic Bill's jersey given to her by Karen Thompson. Go Bills!

Adult Story Hour

Friday, December 3, 7:30 pm

Via Zoom

We resume the relaxing and thought-provoking practice of listening as a story is read. We'll pick up where we left off with the story of Jonah as creatively shared by David Bumbaugh in his book, *The Education of God*. (See *Weekly Update* for clickable link.)

Topic: Adult Story Hour

Time: Dec 3, 2021 7:30 PM

Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82779773140?pwd=SIBEcmdheGE5OW1aZXhORkYySGtQdz09>

Meeting ID: 827 7977 3140

Passcode: Story

Ministry Council

Thursday, December 16, 1:00 pm

The Ministry Council meets via Zoom on the 3rd Thursday of each month. If you'd like to attend the meeting, contact Rev. Michelle for the Zoom link. Any proposals for activities should be sent to Rev. Michelle (minister@uamherst.org) at least one week prior to the next Council meeting, and a representative from the proposing group must attend the meeting to answer questions and help the Council say 'yes' to your idea.



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

Contributing to UU Amherst

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**
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

UU AMHERST BOOK CLUB —Marie Evans

UU Amherst Book Club will meet at noon on the following dates in the Living Room.

For December, we will also have a topic and will be choosing our own books to read, about "Music." We will meet on December 19th. Marie Evans will facilitate.

For January, we will all read the same novel, *State of Terror*, by Hillary Clinton and Louise Penney. We will meet on January 30th.



AMHERST LITTLE FREE PANTRY

PANTRY NEEDS: We encourage donations of healthy, nourishing foods.

[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
Shelf-stable dairy and non-dairy milks
Cereal (single-serve & family size)

Gluten-free products
Non-standard canned vegetables
such as mushrooms, beets, yams
Dish detergent
Deodorant
Shampoo
Diapers in size 4 or 5
Pet food



The Pantry does not distribute OTC medication or first aid supplies for liability reasons. 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, 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. Like us on Facebook: [amherstlittlefreepantry](https://www.facebook.com/amherstlittlefreepantry).

REFUND THE PANTRY

TIRED OF RETURNING YOUR CANS?

email refundthepantry@gmail.com if you would like your bottles and cans to be picked up and brought to a bottle redemption center, with the money made donated to the amherst little free pantry!

Three soda cans are shown at the bottom of the graphic. From left to right: a black can, a red can with a white letter 'E' on it, and another black can.

The collection bins are being put away for the winter. However, Bob & Kathy Wack's granddaughter, Mariel Gousios, will continue to pick up members' CLEAN bottles & cans from their residences. If interested, contact her at refundthepantry@gmail.com.



COVID CORNER

I got my Covid booster and my flu shot today! I still wear masks in public and keep my distance and wash/sanitize my hands frequently. I do travel, shop, and eat out but with precautions. Why am I stating this? **Because Erie County has a Covid transmission rate of 8% this week!** Thanksgiving is around the corner (perhaps already history when you read this) and the Winter Holiday Season is fast approaching.

I desperately want everything to be back to normal, but I don't think that will happen soon. I want our church community to be safe for all and with Covid spreading locally we need to be careful not to become part of the problem.

The Medical Task Force will meet soon to determine if we can loosen our Covid restrictions. We will take into consideration the available science and the local conditions. Our responsibility is to keep everyone safe from Covid-19.

I spoke to my son last week. He gives immunizations for the US Air Force. He wants me to encourage everyone to get their Covid shots, including boosters, and encourage your children and grandchildren to get theirs. Continue to behave in a manner that limits the spread of Covid-19. Be safe and Happy Holidays!

—Barbara Gauger Kent

NEW CLOTHING MINISTRY

There is a new ministry at the UUCA! We are still working on a catchy name but we are already well established in the pantry area.

When Covid19 brought everything to a halt last year (including the rummage sale), a group of rummage people realized that we already had a basement full of items, especially clothing. In an effort to help clean up the basement and find a new home for these donations, the BOT was contacted and it was arranged that a clothing rack would be placed near the food pantry and clothing offered to the community. This was very low key, but we supplied clothing of all shapes and sizes to anyone who was in need. We now also have a cabinet to offer other items that have been donated.

Our mission is to help reduce the impact clothing and other items have on our environment by offering like new and gently used items to those who are in need. The items are available to anyone and everyone and are located next to the food pantry.

We have an immediate need of winter coats, boots, gloves/mittens, hats and scarves. If anyone in our community has any of these items they would like to donate, we will be accepting donations before and after the church service on Sunday, December 5th. We can also arrange to pickup items, contact Dian Tucker, Barry Kent or Pam Kent to make arrangements. We will be looking for helpers soon, so anyone interested in helping, let us know.



Clothing Ministry team prepping the portico.

UU AMHERST DIRECTORY UPDATING

We are putting a call out to everyone to take a moment and check the online directory for accuracy of your information. Since the directory link is for members only for the sake of privacy, we're not publishing it in this newsletter. Please contact Elaine in the Office and she will send you the link. **All requests for changes must be made by December 31st.** If no changes are needed, there's no need for you to do anything. Please contact Elaine, our Office Administrator ONLY if corrections are required. Her email is administrator@uuamherst.org or call 716-634-3010, Tuesday-Friday, 9:00 am-2:00 pm. The online directory is always the most up-to-date and accurate and we urge you to continue to use the digital version. However, printed copies of the directory (not in booklet form) will be available at church services in January and mailed to those who typically cannot attend in person.

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.

Did someone say turkey? This is a vegetarian recipe from Turkey not made with turkey. To make sure these pancakes come out crispy you must squeeze all the water out of the zucchini before mixing it with the other ingredients. From Elaine Louie in *The New York Times*.

Zucchini Pancakes

30 minutes

Makes about 12 pancakes

3 medium zucchini (about 1 pound) shredded

Salt

Freshly ground pepper

3 large eggs, beaten

1/2 cup all purpose flour

1 Tbsp olive oil

1 cup crumbled feta cheese

3 scallions, finely chopped

1/3 cup finely chopped dill

1 tsp baking powder

4 to 6 Tbsp vegetable oil or more as needed

For the yogurt sauce

2/3 cup plain yogurt

2 cloves garlic finely chopped



Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Place zucchini in a colander over a bowl and mix with 1/2 teaspoon salt. Allow to drain for 5 minutes. Transfer to a cloth kitchen towel and squeeze hard to extract as much liquid as possible. Squeeze a second time. Volume will shrink to about half the original amount.

In a large mixing bowl combine zucchini and eggs. Using a fork, mix well. Add flour, 1/2 tsp salt, olive oil, feta, scallions, dill and black pepper. Mix well, add baking powder and mix again.

Place a cast iron skillet or other heavy skillet over medium heat. Add 2 tablespoons vegetable oil and heat until shimmering. Place heaping tablespoons of zucchini batter in pan, allowing room to spread. Flatten them with a spatula if needed. Pancakes should be about 3/8 inch thick and 3 inches in diameter. Fry until golden on one side, turn and fry until golden on the other side. Repeat once or twice, frying about 5 to 6 minutes so pancakes get quite crisp. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels and keep warm in the oven. Continue frying remaining batter, adding more oil as needed. Serve hot.



ENDOWMENT TRUST

When the Endowment Trustees met on October 19, we voted unanimously to return our **Investment Strategy** to a **60/40** mix of stocks and bonds, respectively. We had changed to a 50/50 proportion in August of 2019, expecting the church Board's assessment of UU Amherst's facilities to result in imminent expenditures. Several of us have served on the Facilities Task Force and/or focus group, and it seems that funds will need to be distributed on a more long-term basis. The larger proportion of stocks is expected to yield more income to our portfolio, while still being diversified and somewhat protected from market volatility.

We also instructed our financial advisor to **reinvest dividends** in the funds that pay them, rather than collecting that money in a separate account. This should also maximize growth of our portfolio's value, because stocks tend to gain value at a rate higher than a money market savings account's interest. The Treasurer and I will still be able to access the value of dividends to track Endowment's annual income.

Since its inception in 1989, Endowment **income** (earnings from dividends and interest) was occasionally tapped for **unanticipated projects/capital expenditures** that went beyond the church operating budget. A **specific amount** of money is requested by the church Board of Trustees for a **clearly defined purpose**, then voted on by the Endowment Trustees. The Endowment Trustees determine if disbursement requests are reasonable and have the final decision about whether or not to release funds representing income. If would dip into the portfolio's principal, the congregation would also have to vote in favor.

Though all investments took a value hit at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the stock market rebounded quickly despite other economic struggles. UUCA Endowment was established with a goal of reaching **one million dollars in assets**, at which time the earnings could be disbursed to help fund **regular church operations**. In November 2020, we achieved that goal! We will work with the church Board of Trustees to determine how income dollars will be disbursed, as we continue to protect the principal that generates those earnings.

—Marie Evans (Chair), for your Endowment Trustees: Joe Rautenstrauch (Treasurer), Elaine Cusker, Lauraine Marcus, and John Thompson

Ways to donate to ET:

1. 0.5% of the price of your eligible **AmazonSmile** purchases (regular Amazon prices/ no cost to you).
2. Direct donations by check, online giving through the church website, forwarding investment income, gifts of stock, or a bequest in your will.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE COMMITTEE ON MISSION

When UU Amherst made the transition to policy governance in 2018, the elements of church life were divided into two “pies,” Governance and Ministry. The Governance pie includes the committees that inform and engage in the work of the Board of Trustees: Personnel, Finance, Committee on Mission, Nominating & Leadership Development, and Campus Support (buildings/grounds).

This month we are highlighting the Committee on Mission, sometimes known as the Committee on Shared Ministry. The function of the CoM is to work with committees and ministry teams to articulate that group's purpose in light of the church's stated mission. As this is a fairly new committee, they have been meeting with ministry teams and offering the Circle Way process so that all voices can be heard and clearly stated measurable goals can be established. All of this is in an effort to strengthen and align the various ministries, which fosters more collaboration and unity of purpose within the congregation. The current members of the CoM are Suzanne Christ, Diane Bofinger, Marge Marcille, and Board representative, Jeanine Moyer. When you see these folks at church, offer your gratitude to them for their efforts in building cohesive beloved community.



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