

Issue

DECEMBER 2023

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

Our Staff:

Minister

Rev. Michelle Buhite
Office.....x102
Cell....716-499-8343
minister@uuamherst.org

Finance Clerk

Camilla Lee.....x103
bookkeeper@uuamherst.org

Office Administrator

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

Minister Emerita

Rev. Maureen Q. Thitchener

DECEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 AM

Sunday services are continuing as dual platform—both in-person and livestreamed. A link to our YouTube channel is available on our website. You can view the recorded service anytime on the channel. Invite friends and family! Remember that coffee hour follows.

Supervised Care for Littles available in the room adjoining the Atrium.

Multi Sensory Services for All Ages

12/3 *Homepace* Guest Speaker: James J. Zawodzinski, Jr.
Supporting at-risk youth achieve independence two generations at a time.

Like the Inn in Bethlehem, sometimes young parents just need a safe place and the support of wise, compassionate, and loving people to give their baby a good start and the skills needed to succeed in life. We will be sharing the plate with Homespace this month and all funds will go directly to enhance the holidays for the residents.

12/10 *Gather the Spirit* The LD&NC
(The Leadership Development and Nominating Committee)
Geese fly together in formation, upholding each other to make their long journey easier. Elephants live in family groups for support and social interaction. Orcas swim together for protection and hunting; it seems natural to gather together. We gather each Sunday... For the sermon, for the music, for meetings... But there is so much more to THE U than just this. Join us today to hear from members who are participants in many of the activities. We have here for enriching our lives at THE U.

12/17 *A Christmas Carol* Rev. Michelle & Friends
Charles Dickens' 1843 novella, A Christmas Carol, has inspired adaptation in every medium, including The Muppets. Our abridged version is offered in a readers' theater style and features the talents of members and friends of UU Amherst. This would be a great service to invite friends and family to attend.

12/24 *Christmas Eve, Unfolding* Rev. Michelle
This year we are celebrating Christmas Eve in the morning service only. What does it mean to confront the age-old story in the light of day? Can we still find and share the rebirth of Love and the promise of peace, not shrouded in darkness?

12/31 *UUCA's 70th Anniversary* Jerry Kent
A member of UU Amherst for the past 70 years, Jerry will share the positive impacts the church and its members have had on his life and others.

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.*

MINISTER'S CORNER



“Silver Vega”

I’m using this monthly column to engage in a virtual book discussion together; I read the book and I’m discussing it with you! The book is *For A New Generation*, by Christian church builder, Lee Kricher. This month we address the fourth of five strategies: **Elevate Your Standards**.

The author begins this chapter in the same way he has begun the preceding ones—with a story. His story was about purchasing a used red Chevrolet Vega, and what a lousy car it was. I know this. My first car purchase was a red Vega that consumed a quart of oil each week. His Vega was growing rust at about the same rate. Instead of saving money to buy a newer car, the author chose to paint his Vega classic Mercedes silver. It was still a crappy car - only now it was silver. You can’t fix serious problems with a new coat of paint. Surface-level changes will not create transformation.

Kricher’s approach to transforming churches is to pursue excellence - “minding the gap” between where we are as a church and where we have the potential to be. That is the gap that must be identified and closed. His answer is to elevate our standards: elevating the weekend service to make it easier for members to invite young adults. New volunteer roles were created (parking lot attendants, greeters, etc). Hey, that sounds like our Connections Team!

Another area of elevation is Music. Oh, boy. If you want to raise a congregation’s blood pressure, just try to change the music! Do you listen to music created in the 21st century? Me neither. But if we want to grow, we’re going to have to change, and having music that is relevant to various age groups is a vital part of that change.

He says some things about elevating the preaching... whatever.

(I hope you can detect the tongue firmly planted against my cheek.)

I do put a lot of thought and energy toward the Sunday service; it’s important to me that it is as excellent as I can make it.

Finally, Kricher notes that making the commitment to become a new generation church is a costly one. While some changes might result in savings, more will have dollar signs attached. His congregation dedicated 10% of their total annual budget on expenses directly related to reaching the next generation. If we did that... Wow, what an impact that could make! He notes, “I knew we were making progress in elevating our standards when a common reason people gave for inviting others was because we always did things at our church with excellence.” One thing leads to another.

Thoughtfully,
Rev. Michelle

Share the Offering

Throughout the month of December we will share the offering with Homespace: supporting at-risk youth to achieve independence two generations at a time.

To participate, simply make checks out to UU Amherst with “Homespace” in the memo line. Or place a cash contribution in an envelope with “Homespace” on the front. Thank you for supporting this important ministry.

BOARD REPORT

On Sunday November 12th, Don Tucker presented a report from the Facilities Task Force on the state of our facilities, including recent upgrades and repairs made but, more importantly, focusing on the many needs our buildings have that are yet to be addressed.

The Facilities Task Force is proposing that the congregation authorize spending \$10,000 for Wendel Firm to perform an engineering and architectural study of our facilities to come up with recommendations and their costs so we can better determine how we need to proceed to best meet our needs.

The overwhelming majority response from the many congregants present at the meeting was to be given the opportunity to vote on that proposal sooner rather than later.

The BOT is calling a Special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 10th at 12 noon where the Wendel proposal will be voted on. Please make it a point to be there as we need a quorum of 50 members to conduct the vote.

It has been suggested that the mansion, which was built in the first decade of the 20th century, was purchased from descendants of Jonas Williams, the founder of Williamsville. Recent research by two different groups of our congregants using two different methods did not find any evidence that there is any such connection.

Amherst Alarm & Suburban Lock & Key have nearly completed work on the upgrades to our security system. There are now door cameras at our main entrance from the parking lot and the side door near the Pantry. When finished, those doors can be opened from a control panel in the administrator's office which also shows who is at the door seeking access.

Additionally, we will be moving to a key fob system rather than our current key and door lock system. We expect to test this system in the next few weeks and expand it when proven effective. The current key lock box will be removed after that.

As I write this, we are approaching the holiday season. Please enjoy whichever holidays you choose to celebrate with your family and friends.

Randy Kent, Board Chair (linrkent@yahoo.com)



GENEROSITY DRIVE - PLEDGE NOW!

We are "Reimagining US at 70"!

We are looking to the future and creating a firm foundation for those who will call UU Amherst home in the years to come.

You can change your pledge fulfillment plans at anytime. Payments can be made anytime, in any amount, and at any frequency that is convenient for you. Pledges can also be paid in cash, by check, credit card, distributions, or automatic withdrawal.*

*Please contact UU Bookkeeper, Camilla Lee, if you need assistance.



UU AMHERST BOOK GROUP

UU Amherst's Book Club meets in the church Library/Living Room at 12 noon on the last Sunday of the month (September through May). We alternate between picking a general topic for the month for which participants can choose any relevant book they'd like to read, and choosing one "common read" book. All are welcome to attend our meetings, whether or not you've "done the reading."

Our TOPIC for November 26 is Gratitude, as proposed by Suzanne Christ. Marie Evans will lead the conversation about which books readers picked for this theme.

The BOOK for December 31 is *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. That meeting's facilitator, Lauraine Marcus, recommended it.

Our TOPIC for January 28, 2024 is any book by Anne Lamont. Wendy Scott, who put this idea forward, will be guiding our discussion.



THEATER LOVERS

We had a lovely outing on November 12 to *Sisters in LAW* (about Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg) and dinner at the recently expanded Lebro's restaurant.

Watch for an all-church email and information in the January newsletter about Jewish Repertory Theatre's next show, *Kinder Transport* by Diane Samuels, which will be on stage February 1 - 25.

Save the date Sunday, February 18, for our group outing to the play and dinner afterward.

Marie Evans (evans.marie@gmail.com, 716-636-5770)

About Homespace from page 1

Come start the Advent season by attending the first December service with Homespace. For more than 25 years, Homespace has successfully helped youth in foster care (ages 14-21) forge a better life for themselves and their children. Guest speaker, James J. Zawodzinski, Jr. is an attorney at Hodson Russ LLP, and after learning of the important work Homespace does on behalf of the youth in our communities, accepted the position of President of the Board of Directors, a position that he's held for nearly four years. Most recently, James led the search for Homespace's new Executive Director and, together with his Board and certain staff members and youth from Homespace, selected a UU from the Buffalo church (which demonstrates both his and his team's excellent judgment!). James lives in Kenmore with his husband Ryan and their two dogs.

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.

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

CONNECTIONS CORNER

Welcoming newcomers, connecting people to meaningful relationships and interests, developing programming and activities for youth, and growing membership in the congregation.

Led by Linda Joy Groat & Laurie Kasnicki

From you I receive
To you I give
Together we share
And from this we live.

"From You I Receive" #402 in the gray hymnal

The gifts that I am hoping to receive this holiday season aren't things that can be bought at the store. They are not tangibles that can be held in the hand. Peace in my heart, calm breathing space, the awareness to know whether I am opening or closing to what is around me. Those are precious and priceless gifts. They are small, foundational building blocks that lead to greater good for myself and allow me to connect more deeply to the authentic me.

Important questions to ask myself. How am I? How do I feel mentally and physically? What do I need to do to take care of myself, right now? Am I giving now, or receiving? Or both? What am I bringing to others? What do I need from others?

The gifts we give and receive as we connect and serve one another in our congregation are the building blocks that create the bigger weaving of us together. The result is the "emergent phenomenon" that is congregational life. According to Microsoft Bing, "Emergent phenomenon is a concept that describes the emergence of complex patterns and behaviors that arise from the interaction of simpler components." Basically, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts". It represents synergy- the energy and possibility that is created when all parts are working together. Snowflakes represent this concept, where simple patterns, repeated over and over again, result in an incredibly beautiful, complex, unique, and ephemeral (time limited) outcome.

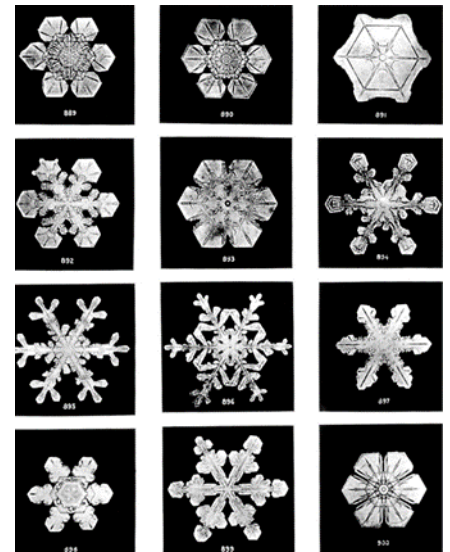
Everything we give to and receive from one another is part of this synergy. When we show up for a project, team, activity, or meeting, we are giving gifts to each other. I see this happening all over our congregation and it is building in intensity, frequency, and variety as we welcome new members to the U. We are creating a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts!

The Volunteer Sign Up is our "one stop shopping" portal for all things Volunteer, and includes all of our Sunday service participation opportunities; along with descriptions for each position, linked to the headings in each column of the spreadsheet. A link to the sign up will be included in each *Weekly Update*. Anyone needing help for the spreadsheet access, please email Linda Joy at lmgeag@gmail.com.

In addition, hard copies of these opportunities are now available in a rainbow colored binder, called the Volunteer Job Descriptions @ the U, on the coffee table behind the Welcome Center.

Families with children are coming and we want them to feel welcome! If you are able, please consider being an Extra Pair of Hands once a month to support children and families during service for about 30 minutes. Training is provided.

Please email Linda Joy at lmgeag@gmail.com to join our team. Everyone is welcome



DECEMBER 2023 CALENDAR

PLEASE NOTE: Some meetings are virtual-only; others are dual platform (Zoom and in-person); and some in-person only. See the notation after the meeting. Zoom links for general groups are published in the *Weekly Update* unless they are hosted on a private account. Zoom events taking place in the Zadmin or Zrev rooms are identified with the abbreviation.

Room abbreviations: EM (Emerson Room); LR Living Room); Bul (Bulfinch-FD Wing); EC (Ecology Center)

Sunday, December 3rd

12:00 pm: Little Free Pantry Meeting LR

Monday, December 4th

2:00 pm: Sue Tannehill Talk EM/LR

Tuesday, December 5th

12:30 pm: Women's Group Lunch EM

Thursday, December 7th

12:00 pm: Retired Men's Lunch (aka ROMEOS)-
(Monthly 1st Thr. Buffalo Brew Pub)

7:00 pm: Dare to Lead Book Discussion

Friday, December 8th

6:00 pm: Calendar Meeting EM

Sunday, December 10th

12:00 pm: Special Congregational Meeting

Tuesday, December 12th (monthly 2nd Tue)

7:00 pm: Connections Meeting Zadmin

Wednesday, December 13th (monthly 2nd Wed)

5:30 pm: Finance Committee EM

Thursday, December 14th (monthly 2d Thr)

6:30 pm: John Newman Mission Rental LR

7:30 pm: Green Justice Team Meeting Zoom

Saturday, December 16th

10:15 am: Ministry Train Meeting Zoom

Wednesday, December 20th (monthly 3rd Wed)

7:00 pm: Board Meeting EM

Monday, December 25th

CHRISTMAS DAY

Sunday, December 31st (monthly last Sun)

12:00 pm: UU Amherst Book Club LR

RECURRING:

UU Universe-ity Sunrise Sessions continues M-F 8:30 am.

All "tree" names are for Village groups

Saturdays, December 2nd-30th

7:00 pm: Birch Bunch Zoom

Sundays, December 3rd-31st

9:30 am: Choir Rehearsal EM

10:30 am: Sunday service—in-person and livestream
Coffee Hour following

Mondays, December 4th-25th

7:00 pm: Tulip Crabapple Zadmin (weekly)

L. Marcus

7:30 pm: Marvelous Maples (2nd & 4th Mon:
12/11 & 12/25) R. Palmere

Tuesdays, December 5th-26th (weekly)

12:30 pm: Women's Study Group Zoom

Wednesdays, December 6th-27th

1:30 pm: Caring Team (2nd Wed 12/13) Zoom

7:00 pm: Marlana's Covenant Group

(2nd Weds 12/13) LR

1:30 pm: 3rd Wednesday Covenant Group (12/20)

7:00 pm: Northtowns Village (3rd Wed 12/20)

7:00 pm: Bofinger Covenant Group (3rd Wed 12/20)

Reminder: Groups, please restore rooms before leaving. Return chairs to their places and take any papers (etc) with you or dispose of them properly.

Kitchen Storage: All opened packages must be enclosed in plastic containers or Ziplock bags before placing in cupboards.

Thank you.



Angel Tree Transforms into Winter Glove Tree for Clothing Ministry!

From now until January, let's hang mittens and gloves on the "Angel Tree" in the lobby!!!!

Clothing Ministry says that there are never enough gloves, mittens or boots to put out during the winter months. Let's see how festive we can make our Clothing Ministry tree with all sizes of gloves and mittens. If you bring boots, we'll put them under the tree!

Upcoming Connections Meetings

Please email Linda Joy at lmgeag@gmail.com to join our team. Everyone is welcome.

Next Connections Meeting Zoom (2nd Tuesday, monthly)

Tuesday, December 12th, 7:00-8:15pm
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88088659617>
pwd=aXh3ZkhvTE9IMEtCbDJOWXIIvKZnUT09
Meeting ID: 880 8865 9617
Passcode: 854312

All Aboard! Next Ministry Train Meeting Zoom:

Team leads and members are invited to come and hear what we are all doing together. It's a great way to get involved and see what opportunities are available.

Saturday, December 16th, 10:15-11:30am
[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85453433514?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85453433514?pwd=w2BaRF0jh6HI6pb9hdaaalzXu6F0bx.1)
pwd=w2BaRF0jh6HI6pb9hdaaalzXu6F0bx.1
Meeting ID: 854 5343 3514
Passcode: Ministry

MINISTRY & MORE

Plan Ahead: Christmas Eve

Since December 24 falls on a Sunday this year, we will have just one service in the morning at 10:30 am. Rev. Michelle and the Board agreed that a morning service would be the most inclusive for our folks who have family gatherings or who don't wish to drive after dark.

Book Discussion

Dare to Lead (Brené Brown) book discussion ends on Thursday, 12/7. Watch for another cohort forming in early spring 2024

Grief Group Forming

There is interest in forming a UU Amherst grief support group. Contact Rev. Michelle with preferences (day/evening, Zoom/in-person) if you are interested in participating.

Tuesday Women's Group

This month our in-person meeting will be Tuesday, December 5th. We will meet in the Emerson Room at 12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and a beverage.

Other December meetings are:
December 12, 19 and 26. These meetings will be on Zoom at 12:30 p.m.

Facilities Coordination

Sun, Nov 26 - Sat, Dec 2 - Randy Kent
Sun, Dec 3 - Sat, Dec 9 - Bob Johnson
Sun, Dec 10 - Sat, Dec 16 - Don Tucker
Sun, Dec 17 - Sat, Dec 23 - Dian Tucker
Sun, Dec 24 - Sat, Dec 30 - Barry Kent
Sun, Dec 31 - Sat, Jan 6 - Bruce Becker

Routine facility-related questions or concerns should be directed to the Office Administrator, or in emergencies to the assigned Facility Coordination point person.

LITTLE FREE PANTRY

THANK YOU to Wendy Scott for storytelling, Doreen and Debby for potluck food coordination, all our "witches" who performed, and to everyone who attended and made donations at our first Witch Dance fundraiser! Meg Sabella brought this "weird idea" to fruition and we're so grateful for her enthusiasm and creative flair. We received about 17 bags of non-perishable food items and over \$1,200 in monetary gifts, which will help us continue providing for hungry neighbors this winter. In case you missed it, the dance video is on the Pantry's Facebook page.

We're pleased to announce that the Pantry has received 501(c)(3) non-profit organization status from the IRS. You may now make donation checks payable directly to **Amherst Little Free Pantry Ltd.** and your contributions will be tax deductible.

One of our team members mentioned that she has a health insurance benefit to purchase health items from an online marketplace. The credit expires at the end of each calendar year, and she's planning to use it to obtain items for the pantry. While we don't stock any medications, many FSA programs do offer products we could use: lip balm, body wash, body lotion, feminine hygiene pads and tampons. If you have use-it-or-lose-it health savings funds or credits that you won't be using yourself, please remember us!

Marie Evans (Chair), evans.marie@gmail.com, with Meg Sabella (Treasurer) and Doreen Park (Administrative Officer)



ENDOWMENT TRUST

The holiday season brings thoughts of joy and gratitude, and there's no better time to express our thanks and sincere appreciation for all that you do for UU Amherst. Your donations to the Endowment Trust reflect your commitment to insuring the future of our beloved community. It enabled the Endowment to contribute \$45,000 to the congregation's annual operating budget this year. A motion will be presented at the February Annual meeting to obtain congregation approval of the Endowment's October action for future budget contribution:

On an annual basis, the Endowment Trust commits to provide a gift to the UU Amherst up to 5% of the total value of unrestricted funds for the operating budget. This commitment will be reviewed at each Endowment October meeting.

The December 31st IRS deadline for tax deductions will be here before you realize it. We encourage you to discuss year-end charitable actions with your financial, tax, and legal advisors and to explore the related resources to help you increase your charitable impact and reduce your taxable income. Please keep the Endowment in mind.

As of November 15th, the total value of our funds with Level Wealth Management was \$1,029,672.76, with an additional \$5,000 in Citizen Bank. Our next scheduled meeting is January 16, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the Emerson Room. UU Amherst members are welcome to attend (please contact a Trustee in advance if you have a specific topic/question). Also, January will be the last session for Elaine Cusker, our recording secretary, who will be completing her five year term. She has gone above and beyond, being instrumental in crafting the joint Board of Trustees/Endowment Trust Gift-Giving Policy, laying the groundwork for reactivating the Legacy Circle, developing position packets and more.

During the month of October, Gilbert Jordan donated in memory of Jack and Betty Howell. Betty and Gilbert's wife were first cousins and over 75 years, the Gilberts and Jordans travelled together many times, here and abroad.

Lauraine Marcus, on behalf of the Endowment Trustees Elaine Cusker, John Thompson, Dorothy Reade, Barry Kent

COMMITTEE ON MISSION (CoM)

The CoM is looking to meet with another Ministry Team or Board of Trustees Committee to work on their mission and goals. CoM meets with teams and committees as needed to develop missions and goals, and teach the circle way. If your team or committee would like to meet with CoM after the holidays, contact Diane Bofinger at dpbofinger@gmail.com, 716-689-8954 (call), or 716-418-3272 (text).

The purpose of our work is to align the mission and goals of all of the ministry teams and BOT Committees with the mission of the congregation. This written information will inform the rest of our community about the work of each team/committee and enable these groups to continue their work as leadership changes over the years.

Diane Bofinger, CoM Chair, and Committee Members, Marge Marcille (Scribe), and Jeanine Moyer (Board Liaison)

UU CAMPUS MINISTRY AND YOUNG ADULT (18-21ISH)

The UB Campus Ministry Advisors, Bob Johnson (main campus contact), Diane Bofinger, and Scott Harrigan spoke briefly about setting up a meeting over the next month to brainstorm ideas for the school year. If you have ideas of things that we can do on campus and would like to join our discussion, please contact me.

Are you a young adult 18-21ish looking for connection with others in this age range or life stage? Let me know. You may be in college or considering college, but you don't have to be! There are many other life choices! Perhaps we can get a group together for support & exploration .

Diane Bofinger (she/her/hers) (text 716-418-3272), Co-Advisor, UB Campus Ministry

CLOTHING MINISTRY/FUNDRAISING TASK GOUP

The Clothing Ministry is going strong and winter apparel is flying off of the rack. We will start putting boots and coats out in December. We always welcome donations of clean, good condition clothing and accessories for our ministry. Donation bins are located in the lobby coat room and on the second floor of the Faith Development wing.

The FUN-draising Task Force has been very busy this fall and we don't have any planned events in December to tell you about. We may host a Sunday afternoon at the movies before Christmas. Is anyone interested? Let us know. We do have an event planned for Sunday, January 28, 2024. It will be a Spaghetti Linner! What is a Linner, you may ask? It is a meal served in the afternoon, between lunch and dinner time. More details and sign up will be in January.

Clothing Ministry Team, Dian (diantucker17@gmail.com) and Don Tucker, Pam and Jerry Kent, Barry Kent and Barbara Kent Gauger

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 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 recipe can be made regular or vegan, depending on the choice of stock used.

Pasta Fagioli

3 garlic cloves, minced
3 cans butter beans or cannellini beans, rinsed
2 cans chick peas, rinsed
1 qt. chicken stock or vegetable stock
1 cup canned crushed tomatoes
Olive oil
1 box ditalini pasta
3 Hungarian peppers cut in 1 inch rings
Crusty Italian bread

Sauté all the beans and cook for 4 to 5 hours on low heat, adding more stock to keep the liquid loose.



Boil ditalini per package instructions. Place cut peppers in several tablespoons of olive oil and microwave until they are soft. Serve the bean mixture over the pasta with buttered, crusty bread with the Hungarian peppers on top or on the side.



NOTICE!
Special
Congregational Meeting
Sunday, December 10, 2023 - 12:00n

In Person & Remote
Participation

*Advance Registration
Required For Remote
Participation Via
UU Amherst YouTube Channel*

Business To Be Conducted
**Consideration Of A \$10,000 Expenditure To
Facilitate An Updated Engineering & Architectural
Report Focusing On Options For The
Future Of Our Campus' Buildings**

To register to participate remotely, call Bruce Becker at 716-880-7291.

COMPASSIONATE LISTENING CIRCLE (MULTI-FAITH EVENT)

January 4th, 6:00-8:30 pm at UU Amherst
(Co-sponsored by the NRC and UU Amherst)

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Look for an email with the Google form link, no phone or email registrations can be accepted.

The purpose would be to see what we, as a church and further still what the NRC, can do to facilitate bringing our community together through this painful global event. The goal to see how we are more alike than different and by sharing perspectives we can come to greater understanding of one another.

It will be a vegetarian pot luck to be respectful of and inclusive of the multi-faith community. Each congregation will be able to have 5-7 participants. We are limited to 96 in the Emerson Room due to fire code. If this goes as planned, we will look to do more of these events in the near future.

For each course of the meal, there will be a conversation starter. We will randomize the participants so they will have the opportunity to meet many new people, have deep level conversations and create new friendships. People will change tables (except the facilitators) between each course.

Appetizer time: How have the events in the Middle East impacted you, your family and your religious community? What are the similarities of those at the table in how we were impacted?

Main Course time: What can we do in our own religious homes, and our communities, to promote greater understanding of one another? What keeps us separate? What will bring us together?

Dessert time: What are some immediate actions you can take, both individually and collectively, in bringing peace to our region and beyond? (These will be recorded and sent out to the participants so they can create an individual action plan)

If you are unable to participate in the Listening Circle, you can support the event by becoming a greeter, acting as a circle facilitator (must have had facilitator training and a special event for facilitators will be scheduled prior to the event), helping with set-up and clean up, and serving food. This is a wonderful opportunity to showcase what UU Amherst has to offer. If you would like to be on our amazing event team, please email Karen Thompson @ kkuhn745@gmail.com. You can also text me at 726-628-4384. Your help will be greatly appreciated! (Watch the *Weekly Update* for any changes.)

We expect, by the end of the evening, to come away with a more compassionate community regarding the current events of the Middle East and each other, actionable items that individual and congregations can do to create a more peaceful, beloved community.

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

WE ARE:

ALL CONNECTED

STRONGER TOGETHER

LOVE'S HANDS IN THE WORLD

CALLED TO CREATE JUSTICE

**RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE
ANOTHER AND THE EARTH**

 [UU.ORG/IMAGES](http://uu.org/images)



UU AMHERST

Fostering Justice and Compassion

6320 Main Street
Williamsville, NY 14221
634-3010
www.uuamherst.org