

Issue

MARCH 2025

The Foreword

The Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst
6320 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221
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Office Hours Tues.—Fri. 9am to 2pm www.uuamherst.org



UU AMHERST

*Fostering Justice
and Compassion*

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The Gift of Seeds

Sunday, March 23rd

Together, let's practice receiving hundreds of varieties of regionally adapted seeds as gifts, cultivating gift culture as well as community, nourishing all generations to come! Come ready to reflect, connect and honor your gifts as we seed a more abundant community and future together.

Together we're going to laugh, play, send each other home with many regionally adapted seeds from Fruition Seeds in Naples as we sing and perhaps even shed a tear or two.

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.*

Finding Our Center

When we think about Finding Our Center, we might turn to resources that offer suggestions about HOW to do it - and many of those resources have specific spiritual points of view. Imagine standing in front of the shelves at Barnes & Noble and being completely overwhelmed at all of the possible activities (and non-activities) to choose from. Whew!

Although HOW is an excellent way to proceed, I wonder about other interesting questions...Why? When? With Whom? What does it even look like (or feel like or taste like, etc) to be “centered”? There are a lot of obstacles to centeredness, not the least of which is wondering if we’re doing it “right”.

We’re going to spend a good amount of time this month figuring out what Finding Our Center looks (feels, tastes, etc) like in a Unitarian Universalist context and world view. I’m sure we’ll find some good hints in our Faith’s sources of inspiration: experiences of transcending mystery and wonder, words and deeds of prophetic people, wisdom from world religions, Jewish and Christian teachings, humanism and the path of reason, and Earth-centered traditions that instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Finding our Center is going to be crucial in the days and months to come. Let’s support one another as we learn to pace ourselves and find peace and hope in the moment. I think we’ll come out of this month with a greater understanding of What, Why, When, and With Whom, as well as a spiritual toolbox filled with How. So, come, let us reason together.

Cheering you on!
Rev. Michelle

MARCH SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 AM

- | | | |
|------|--|-----------------|
| 3/2 | "A Whiff of Change" | John Snodgrass |
| | The adoption of a dog ushers in a new beginning, but the human-canine relationship has been going on for as long as either of us remember. | |
| | john (lower case intentional) Snodgrass is a frequent and popular speaker at UU Amherst. An instructor in Religion at Canisius University, john is also a playwright and author of many books, the most recent being <i>Shakespeare’s Goddess</i> . | |
| 3/9 | “Finding Our Center: Letting In” | Rev. Michelle |
| 3/16 | “Finding Our Center: Letting Go” | Rev. Michelle |
| 3/23 | “Seeding the Future” | Petra Page-Mann |
| | What if gardens grow us more than we grow them? How does the gift economy already infuse our lives? How can we cultivate gift culture more joyfully as well as courageously? Join life-long UU, gardener and seed grower, Petra Page-Mann of Fruition Seeds (Naples, NY), exploring how adaptive genetics as well as economics can nourish the hunger we all feel much deeper than calories. | |
| 3/30 | “Finding Our Center: Letting Be” | Rev. Michelle |

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.

BOARD REPORT

I am very happy to let you all know that the new boiler heating system for the chapel that we have been working on for well over a year has been installed and is working wonderfully well. The very cold weather this winter will put it to the test but we have every confidence in our new system which now heats our main bathrooms as well as the chapel.

Speaking of bathrooms, the BOT has authorized repairs to the dysfunctional bathrooms in our Administrative Wing, as well as needed minor repairs to our main bathrooms and the kitchen sink which should be completed by early March.

The Facilities Task Force had their first meeting of the year and will begin reviewing the report from the Wendel Architectural and Engineering firm that was authorized by the congregation in 2024. There will be meetings and conversations regarding the future of our facilities throughout the year with any decision on how to proceed to be made by a congregational vote.

Linda Gardner and Bruce Becker are to be commended for their long (44 months) of service on the BOT and we welcome Ruth Bowen and Charlie D'estries as they take their places on this year's board.

We continue to add members to our congregation and look forward to continuing our progress in this our 71st year.

Randy Kent, Board Chair



ENDOWMENT TRUST

The Endowment Trust new configuration after the Annual Meeting will be as follows: John Thompson, Eric Groat, Barry Kent, Tamara Kofke and Dian Tucker. Although officers were discussed at the January meeting, they will be formalized after the Annual Meeting.

Securities (stocks) can be donated to the Endowment Trust—and it is a win/win for you (avoids capital gains tax) and the future of UU Amherst. A Gifting Securities Procedure has been developed to walk you through this if you have not done this for other charities/non-profits. Barry Kent, ET Treasurer, is the contact for Securities Donation form. He will provide you with the information that your securities' custodian will need to complete the charitable donation transfer form.

The next quarterly meeting is April 15th at 6:-00 pm. UU Amherst members are welcome to attend (please contact a Trustee in advance if you have a specific topic/question).

Lauraine Marcus, on behalf of the Endowment Trustees John Thompson, Tamara Kofke, Dian Tucker, Barry Kent, Eric Groat

Contributing to UU Amherst



We are now able to accept stocks and securities. If interested, contact Bruce Becker.

UU AMHERST BOOK GROUP

We meet at noon in the Library/Living Room at UU Amherst on the last Sunday of the month. All are welcome to join us, even if you haven't read a book.

March 30 - BOOK - *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman
(facilitator: Marge)

For April 27, we are skipping ahead to another BOOK as a tie-in with the Green Team's project The Homegrown National Park Initiative - *Nature's Best Hope* by Doug Tallamy. The book is widely available from the publisher (Hachette Book Group), your favorite independent bookshop or discount seller, on Hoopla or Libby, or from the library.

We haven't decided on a TOPIC yet for May 25, but the plan is to meet off-site at Bestcellar Book Bar, 9560 Main Street, Clarence (across from Clarence High School at Gunnville Rd) in their semi-private room.

Questions? Contact Marie Evans



The Work That Reconnects Immersion Workshop Sunday, April 6th, Noon to 4:00 pm Emerson Room

Opt-in to a life sustaining world! The Work That Reconnects (WTR) is a framework and set of practices developed by eco-Buddhist scholar and humanitarian, Joanna Macy. It is a holistic approach to personal and collective transformation that aims to address the ecological and social challenges facing humanity. *It provides a safe and supportive space for individuals to explore and express their emotions about the state of the world, while also fostering a sense of connection and empowerment.*

You are warmly welcomed to explore WTR through embodied practices to inspire actionable hope. During this immersive session, participants will explore moving through the components of the Spiral of The Work That Reconnects: Ground in Gratitude; Honoring Our Pain; Seeing With New Eyes; Going Forth.

The Practices That Guide Us Through the Spiral: Somatic Movement: Grounding/Tapping Practices, Body Movement, Breath-work; Simple Songs; Facilitated Conversations & Small Group Discussions; Guided Meditations.

A light lunch will be served at noon. The workshop begins at 12:30 pm. Beverages will be available throughout the afternoon.

Registration required: <https://forms.gle/vmQnvBbsyqmiMSuz6> (or see Marie Evans) Cost is Pay-What-You-Can (suggested contribution \$10-20, or more!). Our facilitator is Rachel Allen, who will offer her books and related merchandise for sale at the event .



AMHERST LITTLE FREE PANTRY

We appreciate in-kind donations of food or personal care items. Feminine hygiene products are still in short supply and we can always use dish detergent, shampoo, and body lotions. Breakfast cereal, coffee, canned fruit, Chef Boyardee, mac 'n' cheese, pasta and pasta sauce, and peanut butter are perennial needs.



According to HUD's 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report, there has been a 39% increase in experiences of homelessness in New York State. We know that food prices continue to rise, too, and if you spend an hour or two at The U mid-day, you'll see a steady stream of visitors to the pantry. I overheard one man exclaim "Thank you for this!" both as he arrived and as he left. *Donors and volunteers, we're making a difference in people's lives!*

Questions? Contact Marie Evans, Chair

Save the Date!



Candy-Free Easter Egg Hunt Sunday, April 20th

Children will meet in the Chapel at 10:30 am and will follow the Bunny to the Living Room.

After the church service, we have an Egg Hunt with Toy Prizes!

Please invite friends and grand children to join us.
Every child will receive prizes!

The Egg Hunt is a recycling event. Please donate your gently used or new toys for prizes. Leave donations in the Clothing Donations bin.



Fun & Games Saturday, March 29th 10:00 am Emerson Room

"Theater Lovers" is expanding to become "Cultural Explorers"!

Ruth Bowen has a plan to build connections by going together to more events out in the community—youth concerts, high school plays, parks/hiking trails, and other arts events or museums. We're looking to make outings more inclusive and lower cost. We'll still go to plays at Jewish Repertory Theatre (next up: *The Hatmaker's Wife*, in May). Watch for opportunities in all-church emails, the *Weekly Update*, and here in *The Foreword*.

Make a Difference Contribute to the Minister's Discretionary Fund

Checks to UU Amherst
Memo line: Discretionary

We anticipate greater need with frigid temps.

MARCH 2025 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); Murray Meeting Room (MMR)

Saturday, March 1st

10:00 am: Lace Guild (rental) MMR

Sunday, March 2nd

12:00 pm: Amherst Little Free Pantry Meeting LR

Tuesday, March 4th

10:30 am: LD&NC Meeting EM

Wednesday, March 5th

4:30 pm-9:00 pm John Newman Mission EM (rental)

Saturday, March 8th

9:00 am-Noon: WNY Gluten Free Group EM (rental)

Sunday, March 9th

12:00 pm: Poetry as Practice LR

Wednesday, March 12th

5:30 pm: Finance Committee Meeting MMR

Saturday, March 15th

9:00 am: Firewall Meeting EM

11:30 am-2:00 pm: Havurah Chapel/EM

Sunday, March 16th

1:00 pm: Justice Advocacy Group EM

Tuesday, March 18th

6:30 pm: Lace Guild (rental) MMR

Wednesday, March 19th

7:00 pm: Board Meeting MMR

Saturday, March 22nd

9:00 am-3:00 pm: NRHS Banquet (rental)

1:00 pm: Equinox Trail Clean-up & Bonfire

Sunday, March 23rd

10:00 am: UU Amherst Book Group

1:30-4:30 pm: Fruition Seed Chapel/EM

Saturday, March 29th

10:00 am: Fun & Games EM

RECURRING:

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

All "tree" names are for Village groups

Saturdays, March 1st-22nd

7:00 pm: Birch Bunch Zadmin

Sundays, March 2nd-23rd

9:30 am: Creative Meditations & Conversations LR

10:30 am: Sunday service—in-person and livestream; coffee hour following

2/16 (3rd Sun)

12:00 pm: Faith Development MMR

Mondays, March 3rd-24th

6:30 pm: Brene Brown Reading Grp Zoom (weekly)

7:00 pm: Tulip Crabapples Zadmin (weekly)
L. Marcus

Tuesdays, March 4th-25th

12:30 pm: Women's Group Lunch EM (3/4)

Women's Group Zoom (3/11, 3/18,
3/25)

2/11 (2nd Tue)

7:00 pm: Marlana's Covenant Group LR

Wednesdays, March 5th-26th

3/12 (2nd Wed)

1:30 pm: Caring Team Zoom

3/19 (3rd Wed)

1:30 pm: 3rd Wednesday Covenant Group

7:00 pm: Bofinger Covenant Group Zoom

7:00 pm: Northtowns Village Zoom

Thursdays, March 20th

10:00 am: Current Events Zoom

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.



Ministry Train On The Move

All aboard the Ministry Train! Truly, all are welcome to attend the meetings that bring the various areas of ministry together for mutual support, encouragement, and generating new ideas to enhance our connections and live into our mission as a congregation. **The next meeting is Saturday, April 26, 9:30 am-12 noon in the Emerson Room at church.** (If the weather is unruly, watch for a Zoom link!)

Tuesday Women's Group

This month our in-person meeting will be Tuesday, March 4th. We will meet in the Emerson Room at 12:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and a beverage. Other meeting dates via Zoom are: March 11th, 18th, and 25th. See the *Weekly Update* for Zoom link and pass code.



Current Events Zoom

The Current Events Zoom takes place the third Thursday of each month. This month's meeting will be on March 20th at 10:00 am on Zoom. See the *Weekly Update* for link.

Equinox Clean-up & Bonfire

Saturday, March 22nd
1:00-4:00 pm

Come and celebrate the vernal equinox AND give our ecology center trails some love. The work will culminate in a late afternoon bonfire and warm drinks. Please bring trail-appropriate tools. RSVP to minister@uuamherst.org.

A private, gender-neutral restroom is available on the second level of the house portion of our building. If you're offering a tour to a newcomer, be sure to mention that we have this accommodation.

MINISTRY & MORE

Music at UU Amherst

Choir Call-Out & Rehearsals

If you are a singer in search of a song, join the choir! Questions? Contact Linda Delorey for information.

Instrumentalists Wanted

Do you play an instrument? Would you like to be part of a pick-up ensemble or even a soloist? Great! Contact Rev. Michelle (minister@uuamherst.org).

Tech Help Needed!

Are you someone for whom computers and technology are, if not easy-peasy, at least understandable? Have you been wondering how you can be part of the magic that is the wider (online) community of UU Amherst? Yay! This notice is for you!

Needed: Technical Assistant(s) to work with Les in the loft as we live stream and record our services on Sunday mornings. You still get to experience the service - just from an elevated point of view!

Respond to minister@uuamherst.org if you are interested.

SAVE THE DATE

NRC Appreciation Dinner

April 10th 6:00-9:00 pm

The Grapevine, 333 Dick Rd, Depew

To recognize volunteers who have demonstrated outstanding service to the congregation and/or community. Our honorees this year are Dian Tucker and Pam Kent.

Individual reservations must be given to Karen Thompson to insure that all UU attendees are seated together. If you are not at Sunday service to give her your reservation, leave a check for \$65 per person made out to Network of Religious Communities, your name, number of tickets, and dinner choice (Regular, Vegetarian, Gluten-free), in the Office mailbox outside the Administrator's office. Karen will collect all reservations. If you have questions, call or text 716-628-4384.

Reservations are due by March 15th.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Here's a little poem for this spring:

Do all the good you can;
in all the ways you can;
to all the people you can;
at all the times you can;
as long as ever you can.

- R. Monckton Milnes



GSA: Call for Officers

The time has come to create a safe space for LGBTQIA+ youth by starting a UU Amherst GSA club. Currently, we're looking for officers. The only criteria is that the youth are in 10th-12th grade or a recent high school graduate. We're hoping to plan an officer meeting in early April. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Katie Cosgrove at: dfd@uuamherst.org.

In community,
Katie Cosgrove she/her
Director of Faith Development



Save the Date

Join us to help clean up our grounds & gardens

Saturday, May 17th 12 Noon-4:00 pm

(Saturday, May 24th 12-4 backup/rain date)

Thank you to all who brought in cardboard and newsprint for the beds! We have an abundance! No more is needed.

Lost & Found

Numerous items have been found and are in a bin in the lobby coat closet, top shelf. If you recognize anything, please come and claim it.



NOMINATING & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Our new committee members, Julie Marquis and Ellen Moomaw, will be joining us for our meeting on March 4th. We are hoping our Board of Trustees liaison, to be decided after the Annual Meeting, will be able to join us, also. Welcome to you all! We are looking forward to working together.

Our sincere appreciation to those committee members whose terms have ended: Jackie Senders, chair; Marlana Rice and Linda Gardner, board liaison.

Last month we mentioned a survey being done regarding the length of time each person should serve on the Board of Trustees. This survey was done at the time of the Annual Meeting with ample time prior for anyone not attending to contact myself with their vote, as announced in the *Weekly Update* and an "All Church" email. The final result of the vote is unknown at the time of this printing, but will be shared with you in the April issue of *The Foreword*.

The second survey done was a person-to-person survey of the presenters at the December 8th Leadership Service. We spoke with eight out of ten presenters. The information they shared is: 1) they enjoyed doing the service as did people they spoke with, however they would not like it to be done annually; 2) the ALFP got three new people for the pantry team; 3) Poetry As Practice got one new person attending; 4) the other teams/activities did not get any questions of interest or new members to their groups. Leadership Development and Nominating Committee will look at other avenues for training in the coming year.

Suzanne Christ, on behalf of Committee members: Julie Marquis, Ellen Moomaw, Jacqueline Babka



CENTRAL EAST REGION SUMMER INSTITUTE 2025: JULY 6TH - 12TH

"LIVE A LIFE ON FIRE: CHANGE THE WORLD WITH YOUR LOVE"

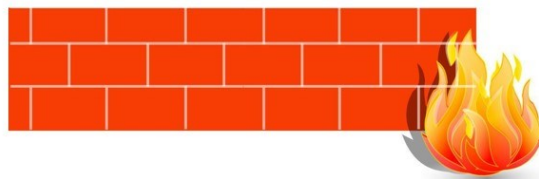
SUMMER INSTITUTE – A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ALL-AGES CAMP

Get ready for an unforgettable week of community, music and learning! Summer Institute 2025 is returning to Oberlin College, OH. Be part of a vibrant community dedicated to personal growth, social justice, and spiritual exploration. Connect with like-minded individuals to:

- Explore new ideas and perspectives
- Enjoy inspiring music and arts
- Be inspired by Rev. Joanna Fontaine Crawford's message

See Rev Michelle, Les, Linda Joy, and/or Kim Diana for information and encouragement to attend. It's fun for all ages!

Firewall Meeting
Saturday March 15th @ 9:00 am
Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst



Firewall is an umbrella organization of community activists. We bring together like minded individuals and groups to Educate & Advocate for common issues.

Firewall is a Political Action Group that is not affiliated with the UU Church of Amherst.

Clothing Ministry

Winter is almost giving way to Spring and we have given away many winter clothes and accessories. Thank you for your donations. We will soon make the changeover to warm weather clothes. Any donations of lightly used or new, clean clothing or accessories are welcome. If you feel that you would like to be more involved with this ministry, contact Dian, Pam, or Barbara. Dian has ordered and put together the new racks purchased from your support of the holiday boutique. Come up and see them sometime.

Clothing Ministry Team, Dian and Don Tucker, Pam and Jerry Kent, Barry Kent and Barbara Kent Gauger

Fundraising Task Group

We are at the end of the first quarter of 2025 and are planning events for the Spring, Summer, and Fall. We are in the early stages of planning, so if you have any ideas and want to help contact Dian, Pam, Karen, or Barbara. We are thinking of a Cinco de Mayo lunch or "May the 4th Be with You Lunch," an early Oktoberfest event, a summer party, a pancake breakfast, etc. Let us know what you think and we will see what comes to fruition.

The Fundraising Task Force: Pam Kent, Dian Tucker Karen Thompson, Barbara Kent Gauger

Holistic Balance Studios*

Holistic Balance Studios is a sanctuary for the exploration of spirituality and creativity. We provide unconditional, interfaith space to be brave, spiritually and creatively, encouraging hands-on practice and exploration of spirituality using art and interaction with nature as primary mediums. Our guided sessions, groups, and retreats incorporate various art forms – painting, ceramics, clay work, and crafting – along with various mindfulness methods such as meditation, prayer walking, and breathwork. We also offer study groups featuring books that promote self-discovery. For deeper personal exploration, we offer spiritual direction, hypnotherapy, and past life regression.

All programs take place in the Holistic Balance Studios, Second Floor (former FD Wing)

Open House, Sunday, March 9th Noon

At 1:00 pm, we will hold a sacred circle in celebration and honor of International Women's Day. All gender identities are welcome.

Book Study Group, Tuesday, March 4th 6:30 pm

Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype by Clarissa Pinkola Estés. Participants are asked to read the book prior to the study group. Chapters to be discussed at subsequent Tuesday meetings. \$5 fee paid at first meeting.

Vision Board Workshop/Retreat, Sunday, March 9th & March 16th 4:00 pm

We will kick off our first two-day retreat with our signature Vision Board Workshop. On March 16th we will help you craft a vision board for inspiration, motivation and manifestation.

Contact Pam Burns (270-570-1792; pamburns62@gmail.com) or Lori Burns (630-430-5678; lorikeller1@msn.com) for questions or details, to make an appointment or register for an event. You can also find us on Facebook at "Holistic Balance Studios." Special note: Lori and Pam have recently joined UU Amherst as members!

*Holistic Balance Studios is a business operating by lease agreement at UU Amherst and is not affiliated with the church.

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.

Spring Lemon Ricotta Pasta

Recipe from Dash’s Market

- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup panko crumbs
- 1/2-1 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 3/4 lb of angel hair pasta
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 6 Tbsp cold salted butter
- 1 lemon, sliced, seeds removed
- 1 cup fresh basil, chopped
- 1 zucchini or yellow summer squash, very thinly sliced
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced or grated
- 2 Tbsp fresh thyme leaves (or 2 tsp dried thyme)
- 8 oz ricotta cheese, whipped if desired



Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add the olive oil, the breadcrumbs, and crushed red pepper flakes. Cook, stirring occasionally until the breadcrumbs are toasted all over, about 4 minutes. Remove the breadcrumbs from the skillet. Lastly season with salt.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the pasta according to package directions until al dente. Drain.

Meanwhile, set your skillet over medium-high heat. Add the 2 tablespoons of butter and lemon slices. Sear until the lemon is caramelized, about 1 minute per side. Remove the lemon from the skillet. Finely chop the lemon slices and mix with the basil.

To the skillet, add the remaining butter, zucchini, garlic, and thyme. Season with salt and pepper. Cook until the zucchini is golden, 5 minutes. Watch the garlic closely. Remove from the heat, stir in the pasta and half of the lemon/basil.

Spread the ricotta into bowls. Add the pasta. Top with breadcrumbs and additional lemon/basil.

Coordination of Caretaker Duties—February

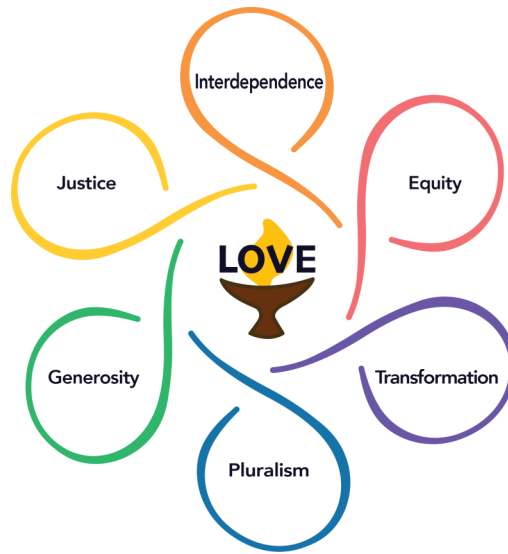
Sunday, March 2 - Saturday, March 8 - Randy Kent

Sunday, March 9 - Saturday, March 15 - Bruce Becker

Sunday, March 16 - Saturday, March 22 - Don & Dian Tucker

Sunday, March 23 - Saturday, March 29 - Bob Johnson

Sunday, March 30 - Saturday, April 5 - Randy Kent



Shared Values graphic created by Tanya Webster for the UUA.



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