

ALL SOULS NEWS -April 2023

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church
1330 Gotham St.
Watertown, NY 13601



315-788-2742 www.allsoulsuu.org
allsoulsuuchurch@gmail.com



Find us on

Facebook

www.facebook.com/AllSoulsUUWatertownNY

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 A.M.

"All Souls—the church that puts its faith in you"

Phone Tree

The default method of notifying the congregation of cancellations is to put the information on the website and send an email to our email list. However if you prefer to be notified by phone, just let the church office know and you'll be put on the "call list".

April Services

April 2 - Aylie Incledon: The Children's Home of Jefferson County

Aylie Incledon, the Kin First Advocate at CHJC, will speak about the Kin First foster program as well as other services CHJC provides.

April 9 – Rev. David Weissbard: "Who Was that Masked Man?"

Those of a certain age will immediately understand that cultural reference. There's this hero whose reality is wildly and passionately misunderstood. Hmm. I wonder how that might relate to Easter Sunday. Curious? An answer is on tap for April 9th.

April 16 – Sarah O'Connell: Separation of Church and State

The First Amendment, which was ratified in 1791, states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." However, the phrase "separation of church and state" itself does not appear in the United States Constitution.

April 23 – Canvass Team: Planting Trees: The Next 100 Years

The theme is the various related sayings, appearing in many cultures in slight variations, about the importance of planting trees under whose shade you will never stand. We will discuss

visions for the church's future, namely the role we can play in the greater community. There may be some surprise appearances!

April 30 – Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt: "Pick Your Battles"

In the present polarized culture around us, almost anything seems capable of provoking a sharp response and creating conflict. But learning when to wade into conflict, and when to avoid it or defuse it, is a complicated discernment. How do you decide when to fight and when to walk away?

Religious Exploration in the Wondering Center Kathy Ashland

Anyone else feeling a little Spring Fever-wishing there wasn't quite so much mud, maybe it was a little warmer....so you could get outside and feel the warmth of the sun, move around a little? Well, I am hoping we can move our wondering center group outside more as the weather improves but I am realistic and expect we'll have to save some of our nature explorations for May. In the meantime we can explore some of the fun of early Spring. What are you looking forward to in Spring?

April 2 BIRDS-- We are in the beginning of spring migration. I saw my first redwing blackbird of the year yesterday. Today the Wondering Center is "going to the birds" with crafts, stories, etc. all centered around our feathered friends. We might even have a bird visitor!

April 9 EASTER- A tradition with a twist--The children and youth will be hosting an Egg Hunt for the adults after church in the Wondering Center! Please join us for the fun!!

April 16 FLOWERS- Explore the world of flowers: color, fragrance, so many flowers-which is your favorite?

April 23 EARTH DAY celebration- Let's focus on Mother Earth today.

April 30 NATURE JOURNALS- We'll each create a journal celebrating our favorite things in nature and if weather is good, we'll go outside to gather ideas for our first entry. If not, what can we see from the windows in the Wondering Center to enjoy?

From the President's Desk

Heather Winn

Happy spring! That sounds so weird, since I feel like we just celebrated Christmas and New Year's Day. Spring is a time of renewal and awaking. The snow is melting and soon the flowers and trees will be blossoming back to life.

This is also a time for renewal for our congregation as our pledge drive is winding down, while our search for a new contract minister is ramping up. I am excited to see where this takes us. The search committee consists of Eleanor Allen, Francis Ashland, and Shannon Starkweather Burke. If you are interested in assisting them in their efforts to find us a contract minister please speak to one of them. We are grateful for the work that they are doing.

In addition to the pledge drive and the ministerial search, Harriet is heading up the preparations for our bicentennial celebration starting this fall. If you have any information, stories, or desire to be part of the festivity planning, please see Harriet!



In the meantime enjoy the changing of the seasons and watching the earth wake up. Spring also means that summer is just around the corner. Packing away the heavy coats and the clunky boots is one of my favorite things!



Collector Warren Allen

Thanks for coming and bringing your kind spirits, and also thanks for your pledge payments and other donations, so that we can pay our group's bills. On this year's pledges, 27 filled out pledge cards for the current fiscal year, totalling \$34,365. This fiscal year is now 71% over, and our checks towards pledges total \$27,705, which is 80% of our pledged goals.

Also, during this FY we have received \$1525.91 towards our Generosity Project (which we later divide, half for our own bills, and one quarter each to the other local charities for which we voted this year, of NCPR public radio and also the Syracuse Workers Center.)

Some of us have found it easier to donate when they can, instead of doing pledge cards, and these unpledged donations are thus far \$4,407.99. We also get some rent donations for our lovely space, and that income thus far this FY is \$565.

Other deposits are \$1000/mo out of our savings. (We used to take \$2000/mo.). And cash left in the canning jars for the Urban Mission is still at \$15.

We look forward to seeing you in person in full 3-D, but if you can't do that then thanks to Robert's talents we can get together in 2-D via Zoom. Y'all come!

Historian's Report Sarah O'Connell

This month, a guest column from Warren Allen. He calls it

A boy; a building; an idea: A tale

There once was an attractive boy named Grosvenor Farmer. His family were farmers, as well as their last name. They lived near Gouverneur NY. Young Grosvenor ate all of his vegetables, and did well in school, and graduated from high school, and graduated from St Lawrence University, and became a physician, and married a strong and handsome woman named Miriam, and they moved to Watertown, and joined the Universalist Church. This couple hired carpenters to build an awesome combination home and doctor's office near Public Square, which was shaped like a cube outside, with skylights in the roof which let the natural sunlight shine down on the flights of stairs below, as the stairs went around a hollow square which was empty except when the Christmas tree was there.

Grosvenor was the trusted doctor for many people over the decades, and Miriam and he enjoyed all of their friends in the Universalist Church, and their many other friends including their niece Barbara Farmer, who later became my Mom. So Grosvenor was a physician for a long long long time until he was way over 90 years old, and then he retired, and maybe became bored with being retired, and he died at age 103.

Then came a bunch of noisy boys, who said let's make a club. We can call it the Black River Valley Club, and we can play cards, and drink rotgut whiskey, and sing as loud as we want, and maybe not let in any girls into our club. And some other boys said yea and let's also think of some other stupid things to do. And so girls and

women, including Barbara Farmer, were not allowed to go into that club, because they were “others”.

After a while the boys inside that clubhouse became really tired of playing cards and drinking rotgut whiskey all by themselves, so these lonely and sad boys wandered away.

And then this still-awesome building became the home of the NNY Community Foundation, where everyone could again enter. People having extra money could donate it so that big local problems could be fixed. And this Foundation group found that some time volunteered by adults, plus a wheelbarrow-full of money could make better some local problems. And then someone else realized that with some volunteered time, some seventh grade and eighth grade students plus a pail-ful of money, some other local problems could be made smaller.

Meanwhile, after Grosvenor and Miriam had died, the Universalists had lost their building in a fire, and they had gained the second name of Unitarians, and they made a new home up the hill near the Zoo. One day, one of them said that while they were doing their services, sometimes people put coins and dollars into the collection plate, and why don't we save half of those coins and dollars for our own expenses here, and share the other half of that cash with two other local charities which help to solve local problems. So the adults decided to do that, and in one year this cash helped to support the local public radio station, plus a group which helps local immigrants. And then someone else said why don't we all, adult people and kid people, get to vote on which will be the next two charities, besides this church, which we support with cash donations. And the congregation did this, and there were 83% fewer unhappy people, when some were not called the “other”.

Reflections from our Transitions Consultant Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt:

My former husband was an alcoholic, a fact that I he and I alternately acknowledged and denied throughout the course of our marriage. One year he resolved to give up drinking for Lent. Because I was convinced at that time of his alcoholism, I heard this resolve with considerable skepticism. However, as the 40 days of Lent passed and he kept going without taking a drink, without complaining much about not drinking, without even appearing to struggle against the temptation to drink, my conviction of his alcoholism faded. He must simply be a person with a love of beer and a larger than average capacity for consuming beer without becoming addicted, I concluded. When Lent ended and he happily resumed drinking, I watched for a time without concern, reassured by my conclusion that this was not an alcoholic—until the same painful dynamics in our home resumed, now seeming worse because we had gone through a time when alcoholism was not present.



We are nearing the end of the season of Lent, a time traditionally set aside to assess our attachments, what we have in our lives that perhaps has come to have too much power over us. If the stereotypical jokes about Lent as a time to give up chocolate are set aside, the experience of doing without something can be an enlightening exercise, especially if something more significant than chocolate is given up. What is it that seems to hold me back, trip me up, keep me from being my best self, interfere with my ability to be compassionate, block my desire to

grow spiritually? Lent invites us to dig into such questions and see what we learn about our habitual patterns, which ones we control—and which ones more often control us.

As you begin the work of preparing to search for a contract minister, reflecting on patterns of church life will be important. Again and again, you ask yourselves as a congregation—and it is important to see those questions in terms of the congregation rather than one's personal preferences—what do we have in our church that we want to keep as a constant during a ministerial transition? What has been missing in our church that we hope might be started in a new chapter of ministry? And what needs to be set aside, even if it once served us well, set aside because it holds us back from being the robust and supportive congregation we long to be? In all those search-related conversations, attachments will pop up everywhere, each time inviting you to consider whether they are still an integral part of who you are when you are the church at its best. And while letting go of some aspect of congregational life does feel like a loss or a diminishment, letting go also frees up space for new life to emerge. Which was the whole point of giving up something for Lent. Which is the whole point anytime we choose to set aside something that has been in our lives: we do it not to prove what we control, as was the purpose of my former husband's decision to give up alcohol; rather we do it to clear the ground, dispose of what has ceased to be life-giving, and provide an opening for what is about to emerge. May your reflections on what to keep, what to begin, and what to put away in church life, as you prepare to seek a minister, be rich and productive, giving you first glimpses of potential new life.

In faith, hope, and love,
Rev. Kathy

Around the Church

*To see regular church activities, go to allsoulsuu.org and click on the **Weekly Post** for information on that Sunday's service, Religious Exploration plans, the weekly Discussion Hour topic, the Monthly Game Night and more!*

Building and Grounds, Rebecca Carr

Continuing our quest for roof and exterior repairs, as well as regular maintenance.

Carpool Matching

The Membership and Activities Committee is trying to put together a carpool matching service. If you need a ride or want to offer rides, contact the office. These needs and offers will be published in the Members Only version of the Weekly Post, initially. So email the office at allsoulsuuchurch@gmail.com or call during office hours (9-11 Mon, 11-1 Wed, 1-3 Fri) at 315-788-2742. Say what time frames and areas work for you and how many passengers you can take.

For example: On Sundays, Robert South goes in to church at 8 and leaves at 1, so can pick up and drop off in the city of Watertown or adjacent towns (so Dexter proper, Black River, or even Fort Drum, but not Chaumont or Adams). One passenger possible.

This could be another wonderful opportunity for community building at All Souls!

Church Beautifying! Harriet, Chris and Sarah have been working on the Formal Lounge and Minister's Office to restore them to their former pre-flood glory. Harriet took a couple of the paintings of our Washington Street church to the Focal Point to get re-matted. One had a lot of mold on it and the frame shop suggested putting it in kitty litter. It totally worked!



Adopt-A-Highway Spring Cleanup The All Souls semi-annual cleanup will be **Saturday, May 6** (If blizzarding or torrential rainstorm, May 13). Please come and help pick up litter along our adopted highway from the church out to Route 12. If you want to participate, please email Sarah O'Connell at doon45@aol.com or sign up on the clipboard during coffee hour. Wear work clothes and sturdy footwear; we'll provide gloves, safety vests and hard hats. Bring a picker-upper tool if you want. It only takes an hour or two and makes for a great photo-op!

Op Column:

Thoughts on the Surprise Spring Canvass Campaign, Robert South

Normally, we try to have some sort of cute theme to the Canvass. We present the request for pledges with testimonials or interviews or skits. Does this really make it any more palatable? There is indeed a "grand reopening" event in the works for April 23rd, but every service isn't going to have a reminder to pledge and there won't be any skits.

Perhaps this year we could just say, "The church needs money," but actually we're doing pretty well (since being shut down and without a minister was cheap). The thing is, our most loyal members continued to pledge even though there was less for them. That's the nature of those loyal members. And those who are less loyal, well, they weren't going to pledge anyway. So we kept getting money even though we weren't doing as much. Thus we have more money than usual right now, all because of the continuing love of our loyal members.

We intend to capitalize on that money by searching for a minister. That should be a way to pay back those who have stuck with us. So, we need you to stay the course. Sunlight is just around the corner, just keep with us a little longer. Further, an anonymous donor is offering to triple your pledge amount. No, wait, I can't lie. There's no such anonymous donor. It's the same as always. Please pledge the same as always. But you really will get more in the future.

Also, the Canvass is about more than just asking for money. It's not just a pledge drive. It's an effort to gather information. This year we're sending pledge cards and member data cards to everybody who is currently a member of the church. To save on stamps, we combined those in a single household into one envelope, but other than that we are sparing no expense to be thorough. Many recipients (who probably don't take the newsletter) may be asking "how did they get this address?" The modern internet is a wonderful thing, and rest assured no money was spent, except on the stamps. This effort is a change. In recent years, we've started sending pledge packets only to people likely to donate. So we were letting a lot of inactive members off the hook and hitting up "friends." But that's a cop out.

Signing on as a member is an act of saying you support the church and stand ready to help it out. This probably doesn't apply to those who read the newsletter, but if that no longer applies, if you don't support the church you have a duty to withdraw your membership and you have no right to complain about getting a pledge packet. The way you say, "why do you always ask me for money" is to withdraw your membership. If you are broke, give a token amount to let us know you care. So, a new feature of the Member Data Card unequivocally offers an opportunity for those persons who have drifted away (thus, present company excepted) to withdraw. This has always been there, but in a much too subtle way. On the front of the member data card is an option to check "member" or "friend" and it has always been thought that the act of classing oneself as a friend constitutes a withdrawal, but it's rare that someone who has lost interest in us is going to think that through. It needs to be really clear. But if it doesn't apply to you PLEASE don't read it as a message that we don't want you, unless you really don't want us to keep sending pledge packets every year.

Further, the back of the member data card offers an opportunity to provide general feedback. What we're looking for here is a picture of what kind of church would better serve the community. If you like something, tell us and we'll keep it up if enough people agree. If you don't like something, or need more of something we lack, then we may seek to correct those deficiencies if enough people agree. Or maybe not. As a UU church we do have a defined character and we aren't going to totally change our spots, but there's flexibility. And there are limitations to what we are able to do. Much of what you might want only works if people participate and donate, so it isn't up to us, it's up to you. "I don't come because there are so few people," always gets me. If you came there would be one more! At any rate, the general idea is that we won't go on guessing and presuming about what kind of community is out there when it's really something else entirely.

So, promise us money (any token amount qualifies as a pledge) or withdraw your membership. Also either let us know how we have strayed from your expectations and might be able to get you back or else let us know what is awesome and how it represents a potential for something even greater. Alternatively you can recycle your pledge packet. You may remove the stamp from your self addressed stamped envelope and use it for something else. Waste not, want not. But we're hoping some of those lapsed members who still live locally will come back and check us out, at least one last time. April 23rd would be a good time.

Volunteer Opportunity

Help with Hot Meals at Emmanuel Congregational Church UCC

FREE HOT MEALS are available to the community in Watertown at Emmanuel Church three nights a week (Monday, Tuesday and Friday). They are looking for volunteers to help prepare the dinners, serve, and clean up on those nights. Emmanuel Church is at 119 S. Hamilton Street, Watertown. You can sign up by clicking on the link below or visiting their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/EmmanuelChurchUCC>. If you are able to help with more than 1 task each night, sign up accordingly. <https://tinyurl.com/24k732ct>

Keep in Touch!

YouTube Channel Zoom services produced by our congregation are recorded and placed on our You Tube channel for two months. Copyrighted material for which we don't have permission is eliminated, as are elements of the services which may involve sharing of private information.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/ASUUCWatertown> Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/allsoulsuuwatertown/>

Every Month at All Souls

CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)

We now meet in the Social Hall on the third Wednesday of the month, gathering at 6:30 pm to chat, and getting around to the evening's agenda at 7 pm. Our next meeting will be April 19. If you're interested in following a positive spiritual, nature-centered path, feel free to join us!

And Every Week at All Souls

The baskets for your donations to the Urban Mission Food Pantry are always available for your donations. Also, Joanne Harter collects the orange bags in which our newspapers are delivered. She then delivers them to the SPCA to be used to keep the grounds clean.

We serve fair trade coffee during our pot luck coffee hours.

As always, Joanne Harter, our CDO (Chief Decorating Officer) appreciates help with the altar decorations.

Generosity Project

Every year we choose two organizations to share half of our uncommitted plate collections. It works as follows: the collector tracks the uncommitted funds, and the congregation selects the organizations. At the end of the church year, we divide the uncommitted funds in half, retain one half, divide the remainder in half and send those monies to the chosen organizations. This year we chose NCPR and Syracuse Worker Center. Each organization receives 1/4 of the uncommitted funds for the year.

From the Unitarian Universalist Association

-Annual Meeting of the UUA (General Assembly) June 21-25, Pittsburgh, PA

If you're interested in attending either virtually or in-person, let Eleanor Allen know!



UUA Newsletter

Unitarian Universalist Association

March 2023

Dear Leaders,

You all are so much in my heart. These are heartbreaking and terrifying times. An onslaught of oppressive laws and policies are threatening the well-being of our children, young people and adults, and the very fabric of communities. I know how hard you all are working to care for your people and communities while also organizing for justice. I see you. I love you. And you inspire me in your witness and your depth of pastoral care and commitment.

I am praying especially for all our trans and nonbinary+ kids and adults, their families, and the communities supporting them. Too many trans and nonbinary+ people are living in an environment where policy makers are criminalizing their very existence.

My heart is also with all of you in frontline communities and states. I know you are holding so much – too much. We are in the fight to provide support and safe harbor with you, as we have been so many times throughout our history. We may not win every battle but we are in this work for the long haul. And we are digging deeper to expand our partnerships, find new ways to support people, and organize for a future where everyone can fully be who they are and flourish in their identities.

As Unitarian Universalists, we are clear and unapologetic. Our LGBTQIA+ siblings are sacred, whole, and divine. We understand the full expression of the diversity of gender and sexuality is a gift. As progressive people of faith, we know this is a fight for everyone's humanity.

As an Association, we have shown up for trans and nonbinary+ youth and individuals through words and actions. I want to make sure you are aware of these resources for your own efforts and as additional support for members of your communities. Please visit Side With Love's [UPLIFT Action webpage](#) to see our ongoing work and ways your congregation can participate. UPLIFT also sponsors [monthly gatherings](#) for trans and nonbinary+ people of all ages. You can also stay connected to this work, and receive pastoral messages and opportunities to take action by joining our [UPLIFT newsletter](#) and following the [blog](#). Also please visit the UUA's [Five Practices of Welcome Renewal](#) for Welcoming Congregations page for ways to ensure that members of the LGBTQIA+ community can feel fully welcomed, centered, and embraced in your congregation.

I am with you as we confront these devastating challenges – and hold you all close as we work to protect our loved ones, our families, our communities and neighbors.

I pray that each of you, in your own way, is doing something to care for your spirit, to lean into community and love, to tend to your own need for gentleness and care - that we might be nourished for the work that continues.

Yours in love and faith,

Susan

P.S. Here are some additional resources that may be helpful:

From Side With Love

- Webinar recordings on [combatting anti-trans legislation](#) and [spokesperson training](#)
- Upcoming training on [showing up for trans justice](#) and a [Trans Day of Visibility party](#) for trans/nonbinary families
- [Video blessing](#) of solidarity with trans and nonbinary people

From the UUA

- [UUA statement](#) in response to attacks on trans, nonbinary and LGBTQIA+ community
- UUA publisher Skinner House Books will release the groundbreaking book *Authentic Selves* in May. A visually moving celebration of trans and nonbinary+ people and their families, [it can be pre-ordered at UUA's inSpirit UU Book and Gift Shop.](#)

Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray spends her days strengthening the thriving mission of this faith. In her spare time, she enjoys being with her family and playing with their dog, Hercules.

President: Heather Winn
Vice President: Amy Summerville-Loomis
Secretary: Sarah O'Connell
Treasurer: Eleanor Allen eleonora.asuuc@gmail.com
Trustee: Janine LaClair
Trustee: Shannon Starkweather_ Burke
Trustee: Catherine Burns catherineb.asuuc@gmail.com
Trustee: Joanne Harter

Sexton: John Crupi
Music: Toni Zygadlo
Childcare: Kim Davis:
Religious Education: Kathy
Ashland, Kelly Sackheim

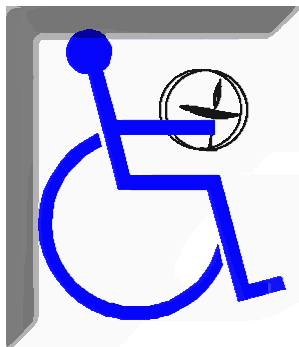
Board meetings are held the fourth
Friday at 9:30 AM at the church.
Meetings are open to all members
of the congregation.

Newsletter Editor, Harriet McMillan, harriem@allsoulsuu.org
Office Volunteer: M 9-11, W 11-1, F 1-3
Phone (315) 788-2742
E-mail: [allsoulsuuchurch@gmail](mailto:allsoulsuuchurch@gmail.com)
Website: <http://www.allsoulsuu.org>

PLEASE SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER NO LATER THAN THE 15TH OF THE
MONTH.
ITEMS ARE APPRECIATED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church
1330 Gotham St.
Watertown, NY 13601
ALL SOULS NEWS February 2023

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



We affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Our Principles

Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Our Mission

- The mission of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church is to create an environment in which personal and spiritual growth is encouraged; and where each of us is free to explore our individual beliefs and search for meaning.
- We strive to be a warm, supportive, nurturing and inclusive religious community where all people are respected and honored because of their uniqueness.
- We promote acceptance, diversity and social justice through our dealings with each other and our actions in the local and global community.

Visitors are welcome! If, as a visitor to our church community, you find yourself in agreement with Our Principles, please consider joining our church community. Just sign our membership book in the presence of two board members.