

ALL SOULS NEWS -July-August 2021
All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church
1330 Gotham St.
Watertown, NY 13601



315-788-2742 www.allsoulsuu.org

allsoulsuuchurch@gmail.com



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SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 A.M.

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

Now that 70% of New Yorkers have had at least their first coronavirus vaccine and the state has lifted most restrictions, many of us are looking forward to meeting in person for worship once again. However, as of this writing (June 18th) the changes only just happened and the board hasn't had a chance to review the guidance from the CDC and the UUA about resuming in person services. So, please check the weekly post for updates to this tentative schedule as the summer progresses!

There's no service planned for July 4th (Fourth of July weekend)

July 11th, Catherine Burns, one of our two All Souls delegates to the UU General Assembly, will report back on the spiritual impact of participation in General Assembly.

July 18th – Meadville Lombard Theological Seminary is planning a special online service with guest musicians, highlighting their work and programs.

July 25th – Robert South: "Prophets." Our second source says we affirm and promote, "Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love; The best definition of prophecy is literally a play on words: it's "speaking before," meaning both "speaking in advance of" and "speaking in front of." The bible depicts people confronting the question of what to count as a prophet. Can just anyone claim to speak with special moral

authority. The biblical solution was that you only count as a prophet if what you speak of really comes to pass. Nowadays we don't so much expect this to be true in a miraculous sense, but still it's a good standard. For examples of prophetic women and men we often cite not only ancient leaders such as Buddha and Jesus, but also modern ones such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King. But we can apply the same standard without resorting to mysticism. Gandhi and King both spoke before and spoke in advance. What they spoke of indeed came to pass. Many bemoan this as "revering only dead prophets," but that's unfair. We can respect and lend an ear to the iconoclasts of the present time, prospective prophets, but have no duty to actually revere them until they accomplish something. And there's nothing wrong with this.

Stay tuned for any updates and for news about our August services.

Wondering Center

Frances Mercer



HIGH PRIORITY: Hopefully in September we will return to full use of the inside space of the building as well as the grounds. It is important that we start the church year in September with a clear and intentional plan for the why and how of activities and programs for children and youth. To do this we must do the discussion and planning during July and August. We will have at least two planning meetings—one in July and one in August. All who are interested in children, youths and families are encouraged to

contact Frances Mercer—by phone, 315-788-4508 or email, fmercer@twcny.rr.com. She needs to know what days and times are convenient for you for such meetings and what information on needs, issues, concerns, ideas, resources, and approaches should be researched and prepared for consideration at these meetings.

FUN ACTIVITIES FOR THE SUMMER:

- July 1st—meet at Thompson Park for the “July 4th Concert and Fireworks”. Activities at the park begin at 5, followed by the concert presented by the Orchestra of Northern New York. Bring snacks & beverages, blankets & lawn chairs, insect repellent—mosquitoes & ticks. Usually, there is late afternoon picnicking with early evening concert followed by fireworks.
- On August 1st—gathering at the church for everyone—a sort of potluck picnic.
- Sunday Discussion Hour from 1 to 2 P.M. after each Zoom service for those (probably adults) who are interested in gathering around the picnic tables behind the church to discuss the service in a round robin fashion. While the adults engage in the discussions, the children could engage in fun outdoor activities

Opinion

Looking to the Future with Robert South

As an institution, ASUUC has come through a period of trial. The flood and reconstruction would have been trying enough, but on top of that we've been faced with an epic historical event, the COVID 19 pandemic. Most Americans have been vaccinated and the state of New York has lifted most restrictions. Soon, even with caution urged by the UUA, we will come back together almost as before. But it would be false to say we haven't been weakened. Normal ways of welcoming visitors have been impaired. Building use has been completely shut down. While many non-participating members continue to donate financially, only a small core of diehard members have stuck it out as regular attendants at services. At our most recent annual meeting, as members came and went on the screen, we skirted perilously close to losing quorum (depending on what you count as "present" on Zoom). Now we are confronted with the task of coming back, not just gathering in person again, but reviving as the thriving community we remember. The question is

how we do that. There is some talk both in the congregation and outside of it, that we should not try to go back to what was, but see this as an opportunity for change.



Should we try to make major changes now?

Joanne Harter often speaks of the spiritual importance of familiar ritual. I'm not afraid of change, but I'm of the opinion that at this time we should set a goal of trying to get back to what we were like before, more or less, before making changes. Certainly, adaptations will have to be made for new realities. Evolution will be organic as it always is. Processes that were already under way have continued. But this is expressly the worst possible time for opportunistically imposing radical unfamiliar change. What we need to be doing is inviting people *home*. The familiar, to the extent we can approximate it, is the place to start. We should try to run only once we have healed, once we are again strong enough to walk.

Some thoughts on Our Recently Adopted Budget

Frances Mercer

I voted for the 2021-22 Budget that was approved at the Annual Meeting on June 13th. Before voting I looked at the total proposed expenses of \$88,750, which exceed our total expected revenues of \$67,630, by a little over \$21,000. For me, it was important to understand what commitments and priorities were reflected in this budget. I believe that our budget is supportive of our current mission. Here is how I organized my thoughts by grouping the costs under four categories.

1. FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY: We want to keep accurate track of our money—
income, receipts, and expenses.

COST: \$6,100 about 7% of our budgeted expenses

2. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS: We want to take care of our buildings (church
& garage) and grounds so that they remain in good condition and a
wide variety of activities can take place.

COST: \$25,000 about 28% of our budget expenses

3. COMMUNICATIONS: We want to provide for good communications,
information exchange and records.

COST: \$3,050 about 3% of our budgeted expenses

4. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: We want to support and encourage substantial
programs and services consistent with our mission.

COST: \$54,600 about 62% of our budgeted expenses

*SUNDAY SERVICES to provide support for and inspire spiritual growth and
free and responsible searches for truth and meaning.

SUBCATEGORY COST: \$26,990 about 30% of our budgeted expenses

*OTHER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR THE ALL SOULS CONGREGATION to
encourage, build and support a warm, supportive, nurturing, and
inclusive religious/spiritual community where all people are respected
and honored because of their uniqueness.

SUBCATEGORY COST: \$15,625 about 18%

*OUT REACH TO LARGER COMMUNITY to become good neighbors and allies with
causes and groups consistent with UU values—promote acceptance,
diversity and social justice through our dealings with each other and
our actions in the local and global community.

SUBCATEGORY COST: \$6,085 about 7% of our budgeted expenses

ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM ASSOCIATION (UUA) to support
and participate in regional, national and international UU faith causes,
movements and activities.

SUBCATEGORY COST: \$5,900 about 7% of our budgeted expenses

*Special note: We have budgeted about \$31,480 (salary & payroll costs)
for a 1/2 time consulting minister. In my analysis I am assuming that
such minister expenses could be distributed among three of the program
and services categories: Sunday Services (\$15,740), Other Programs and
Activities (\$11,805), and Out Reach to Larger Community (\$3,935). So a
significant amount of the cost in each of these three categories is the
cost for a minister. It is unlikely that we will have such a minister
for the full year, but the things that such a minister might do or
assist with are still needed: 1) plan and lead Sunday services, 2)
provide pastoral care, rites of passage such as memorial services,
marriages, child dedications, leadership development/guidance—work with

Board and committees, religious education, pledge drive/fundraising, and 3) outreach to larger community). Much of the leadership and work done day to day and year to year is not fully reflected in budget figures. Our former minister Guy LaMothe often reminded us at the end of Sunday services that he led: "you are the church". We have to provide the inspiration, commitment, leadership, and work as well as the money.

Thoughts on the Budget

Pat Merz

Frances and Doug: you have put a lot of thought and energy into this analysis. Thanks. Did you have a new way to list the different budget items - a model statement to look at like we see in the annual budget? If so, I think I would benefit from seeing it if you can share it.

From the President's Desk

Heather Winn

Just a short note to let you know what the board is up to. We know that everyone is wondering when the building will reopen. This is a priority of the board as we know that we are all anxious to be able to be together in person. The board is working on getting a policy in place that will make this happen safely. The board is also working on building a covenant for our board and our church. We are working with the current covenant and feel like it is a strong foundation.

I look forward to the next year as being president of the board. I am hoping that this year will be full of renewal, renewing our sense of normalcy and bringing us back together.

From the Historian's Files

Sarah O'Connell



This weekend, June 19th, 2021. Watertown celebrated its third Pride Flag raising at City Hall, and every year the celebration and the acknowledgements grow. All Souls displayed its support with a wonderful display at Thompson Park.

Saturday was also Juneteenth, commemorating the emancipation of enslaved people in the US. The holiday was first celebrated in Texas, where on that date in 1865, in the aftermath of the Civil War, slaves were declared free under the terms of the 1862 Emancipation Proclamation. Last year New York State declared it a state holiday, and just last week, President Biden signed into law that it is a Federal holiday, so this was an important recognition. The event organizer and Mayor

Smith raised the Pan-African flag at City Hall. Later, both flags were flown together.

As always, All Souls was there to be a part of our community.

(Pictures include a few UUs at Pride, the flag raising for Juneteenth, Frances at Juneteenth, and both flags flying at City Hall.)



Around the Church

News from the Memorial Garden

Catherine Burns

Our weather has been very up and down so far this season. I'm afraid that in the knowledge that it is raining in Carthage, I think it is raining in Watertown. So there have been times when the garden may have been a bit dry I have done some weeding and watering, the garden hasn't been totally neglected, and I know Veronica has been putting her hands in the dirt as I can see improvements that I can't claim.

I have sent Harriet some pictures as they say more than words sometimes. Please contact me or Veronica if you have time to see if we're available - it's always more enjoyable to have friends in the garden while we work. It's more fun than "whistling while you work."



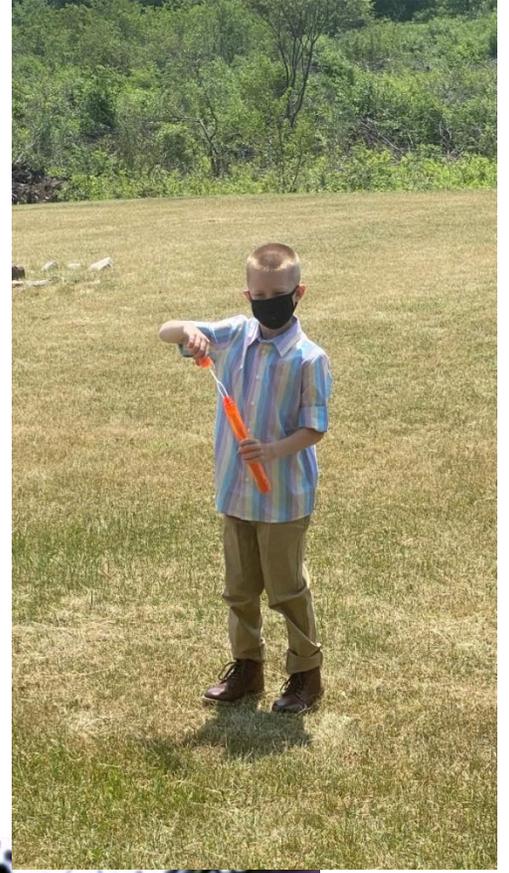
Help wanted: a third volunteer to work in the office one day a week.

Still Looking:

We need a part time custodian, to maintain the building inside and do the work required on the grounds.



**Let's Go Fly a Kite May 30
Wondering Center Activity**



Ma Wo

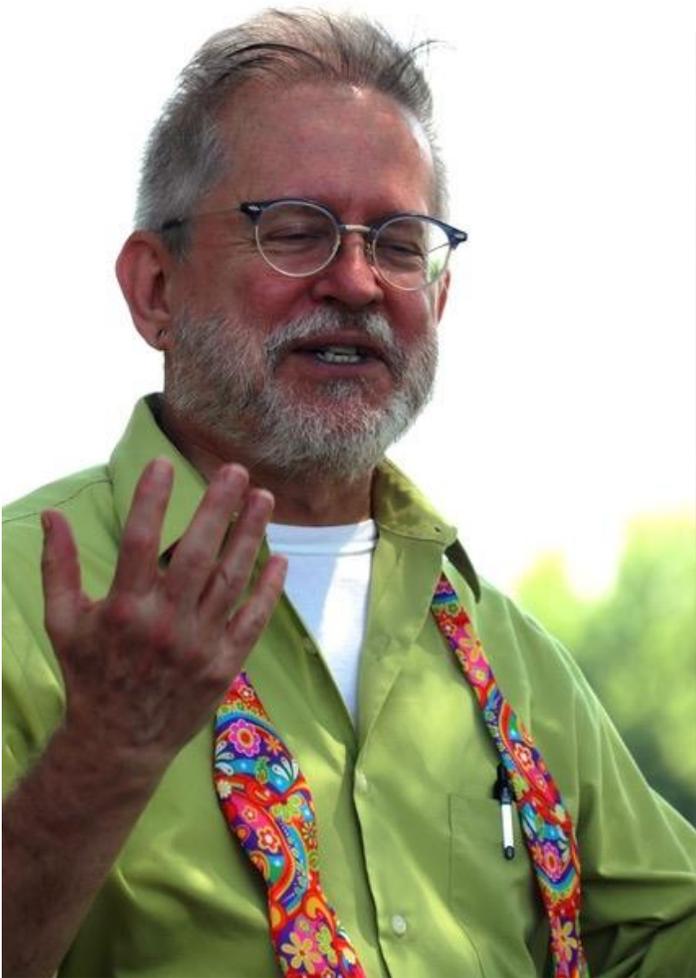


Good Bye Party for Our Minister, Rev. Marty Pelham

Rev. Pelham is moving on to a new church in Maine where he will be the full time minister. The party was held June 6, outside the building.







Pride Day at Thompson Park June 19



Celebration in the Park

Thanks to April Huff for organizing our presence at Pride Day June 19. We decided as a group that we would give away candies and bottled water. Because everything was free, we were not charged a booth fee.

At the same time, All Souls was well represented at the Juneteenth flag raising at City Hall. 7 people represented All Souls.



Save the Dates for Toni and the Grieco Sisters

Toni Greico Zygadlo and her sisters (the Grieco Sisters) have a performance schedule for this summer.

- Grieco Sisters in Adams on August 11
- Toni and a former student (Jordan Davidson) are performing in Adams, July 14, at the Clayton Opera House September 11

Every Month at All Souls CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)

CUUPS will resume meeting the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month when the building reopens.

And Every Week at All Souls

The basket 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 Victim's Assistance Center and Planned Parenthood. Each organization receives 1/4 of the uncommitted funds for the year.

Unitarian Universalist Association

I remember from my time as a parish minister that GA was an exciting chance to connect with UUs from around the country and the world. It also filled me with ideas for books to read, sermon topics to explore, and new programs to try. It also marked a time of transition. The end of another congregational year and a time when the calendar slowed, and the many demands of congregational leadership eased. I usually took vacation and study leave time immediately following GA. This time off was invaluable. Leaders need rest— whether we are lay leaders or congregational staff. And after a year like we've just experienced, it is crucial that we all have some much-needed time off.

I am following my own advice. I am taking time off after GA. I am also taking a break from these regular messages until the end of summer. I am excited to spend time with family and loved ones and give myself permission to “stargaze” without a calendar filled with wall-to-wall meetings and activities. Those of us who are committed to ministry and service can sometimes forget that an important part of our job is to also take care of ourselves. We leaders need time for creativity and imagination, to recharge and renew, and to rediscover the inspiration essential for relevant and dynamic ministry.

GA also marks a time of transition. The end of another congregational year and a time when the calendar slows.

Last summer, many of our volunteer and religious professional leaders were so consumed by the challenges of transitioning to virtual operations that they never took time off. I urge you to do so this summer, and to make sure those you lead and those you work with can do the same.

Rest is critical for the quality and sustainability of our work. And renewal requires more than simply not working. It takes positive energy to “recharge our batteries.” It means pursuing activities that bring joy and spark our creativity and intellect in new ways. Hike through a national park.

Putter in your garden. Try new recipes. Play games. Visit museums and amusement parks that are open again. Sit on the porch in a favorite chair with that pile of books you've been meaning to read.

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

All Souls UU Church Board of Trustees

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Office Administrator:
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Religious Education: Frances Mercer

Board meetings are held the third Thursday at 9:30 AM via Zoom. Meetings are open to all members of the congregation. Contact the office for the link.

Newsletter Editor, Harriet McMillan, harriem@allsoulsuu.org
Office Administrator M, W, F, 10-1
Phone (315) 788-2742
E-mail: 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.

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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.