

ALL SOULS NEWS -February 2021

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church

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Facebook

www.facebook.com/AllSoulsUW WatertownNY

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 A.M.

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

Snow!

In the event we need to cancel a service because of the weather, a notice will be posted on the opening page of our website www.allsoulsuu.org.



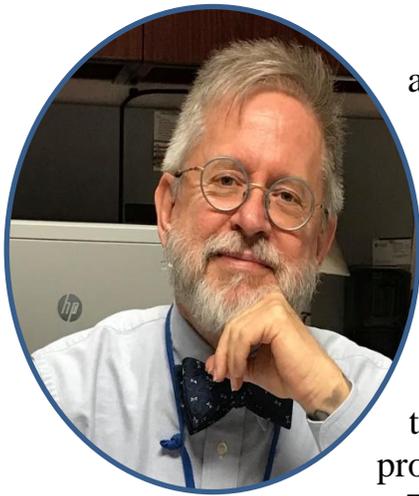
February 7- Reverend Marty Pelham: "Beloved Community is Not a Supermarket." While Beloved Community is filled with a great variety of people and ideas, it is not a place where we get to select and enjoy only what we like. Beloved Community is hard work, beginning with the practice of being in conflict while remaining in right relationship. We are called to be like-hearted.

February 14 - Robert South: "Gradations in the Expanding Circle of Concern." If you look at the seven principles, there is a progression in the circle of concern. We start caring about each individual, progress through concern for larger groups, then all society, the whole world, to the whole universe and everything in it, not just humans. This reflects a progression in all moral development in all cultures, but leads to a conundrum. How can we love all, when we are each so limited? Only by consideration of all. This doesn't necessarily require us to personally fix the whole world, only to take it into account.

February 21 - Reverend Marty Pelham: "Let's Get Uncomfortable." Achieving peace and justice cannot happen without leaving our comfort zone. We will explore four transformative practices for building beloved community.

February 28 – Eleanor Allen: “Purim: The Feast of Lots.” Purim is a joyous Jewish Holiday celebrating how Queen Esther saved the Jews from being slaughtered in a plot devised by the evil Haman. It starts this year on the evening of February 25th and ends at sundown on February 26th. As a child, growing up in a secular Jewish family, Purim was my favorite holiday: it’s celebrated with costume parties and noisemakers – and Queen Esther, a woman with the same name as my mother, is the hero of the day. To religious Jews, the story demonstrates that even though events seem to happen randomly, they really happen according to God’s plan for us. In this service, we’ll listen to the Purim story, and then we’ll discuss whether we believe things happen by chance or according to a divine plan we cannot fathom. You’re encouraged to wear a costume to this zoomed service if you wish. Queen Esther, Mordecai, and Haman, are always popular at Purim parties – but the wildest of costumes are also appropriate.

Reverend Marty Perpend



Many congregations, including ours, are putting some of our attention into exploring how we can utilize our recently gained technology communication skills after we are able to gather in physical proximity again. Most of the conversations which I have been part of so far have focused on worship services.

In recent weeks, I took part in a cooperative adult religious education program led by four ministers and attended by members from five congregations. At the end of the first class, I realized that this technology has the potential to transform, rather than just support, adult religious education programs in the future.

The number of UU congregations that struggle to employ religious education professionals grows every year and adult religious education may be the most widely neglected aspect of congregational life within our movement. What if two or three or four congregations could pool their religious education budgets and utilize technology to offer programming which is not dependent on good weather or what the time the sun sets and what that means for safe driving or what time the kids need to be in bed?

Even if budgets are tight, we can still utilize the vast range of knowledge and experience within our memberships. If the remainder of the UU Principles discussion series are as fruitful as the first class, I can envision the ministerial cluster I am in creating a database of topics and leaders for future efforts.

I’d like each of you to send me one topic you would be interested in exploring as part of a shared adult religious education program. If your knowledge and interest in the topic is enough that you might be interested in developing curriculum and/or leading gatherings, please indicate that as well. Remember, adult religious education in Unitarian Universalism can encompass a wide range. Give your imagination free rein.



New Year's Greetings from Rev. Marty Pelham

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundation under them. - Henry David Thoreau

Happy New Year!

As we exit one of the most difficult and tumultuous years many of us have known, we are grateful for you and your role in the All Souls Unitarian Universalist community. We are grateful for every phone call and email you have shared. We are thankful for every time you have offered, given, and accepted help. We treasure your presence when we gather virtually and long for the day when it will be in person.

There are still difficult times ahead as well as a growing glow of hope on the horizon. As we begin to construct the foundation of a new and better year, please stay in touch. Let us know how we can help you and how we can grow together.

From the President's Desk

Robert South

So, the pandemic rages on and we're still doing everything by Zoom. The building reconstruction is mostly done. We're just waiting for new office furniture, professional furniture cleaning for the old chairs, and the custom making and installation of our new kitchen countertops. That should take us up to early spring, when we will have a finished building and outdoor activities will start being possible. The board has no formal plans to change anything, but there has been some informal discussion of the possibility of how we would start safely doing things beyond Zoom.



There's a blood drive scheduled in April. Spay Neuter Now is asking to use the building once we have space in the social hall. Northern Blend wants to start doing outdoors practice once the weather is nice, but they would have to send people in one at a time to use the bathroom (one per entrance, since they could also open up the RE entrance to the ADA bathroom). And Toni has agreed that if we wanted to do outdoors services in the peace pole area she could play the electric keyboard and we could run a wire out the window and put the audio speaker out there. All these possible activities would require board approval. There's currently no routine for building use or grounds use because the board has banned all group activities, meaning that anything has to be an exception made by the board itself.

Looking ahead, Zoomed services won't be going away, but they will likely get less participative. Some people like the convenience of not having to come to the building physically, and for some that's justified because it's so far or just too difficult. So, once we are in person (even outdoors) I plan to be there with laptop Zooming so people can see what's going on, and it will be recorded for the You Tube channel, but it will just be harder to interact with others who are not

also sitting in front of computer screens. Maybe it will be possible to project you on the big screen when you speak up for Joys and Concerns or something, but that would require more wires. I was planning to just sit at the back with a laptop using the WiFi.

It's fun to think about future better times, but here we are still stuck at home watching each other "on TV." That's still the reality for the present time. And it's unsatisfactory, so we are dwindling away. But it's better than dying. That said, most of us are older, and it would be interesting to know how many have already been vaccinated? I got a call from the clinic on Fort Drum who told me they will call me when they have a vaccine ready and asked if I wanted one. I was surprised because while I have Arthritis, that's not one of the big justifications for prioritization, and I'm only 59 and kind of overweight not seriously obese. But I'll take it when I can. Please do, the rest of you, and then we can be together again.

From the Historian's Files

Sarah O'Connell

Well, 2021 is continuing to be an historic year with the invasion of the Capitol building, the 2nd impeachment of the outgoing president and the wonderful, moving inauguration of our new president.



On January 21, 2017 All Souls was the site for a Sister March to coincide with the national Women's March being held in Washington, DC, (still said to be the largest single-day rally there in US history). With the hard work of our committee, including Katie Fitzgerald from the AAUW, we put together an amazing slate of speakers to address many topics crucial to the human rights of the American people. It was standing room only with the sanctuary opened up so more than 250 people could attend (many of them in pink pussy hats). Throughout the next 4 years, All Souls people have always been found participating in rallies, marches, vigils and parades, whatever the cause, global weather crises, Black

Lives Matter, immigration, etc.. We created our Facebook page, [facebook.com/sistermarchwatertownny](https://www.facebook.com/sistermarchwatertownny) in February so we could share information about ongoing events.

Our second Sister March at All Souls was held on January 20, 2018, with another panel of speakers. The turnout was not as large as the first one, but many members continued to work in smaller groups to write letters, sign petitions, etc. We persisted and resisted!

Our third Sister March was held on January 19, 2019. The past two years had seen an unprecedented number of women running for office - and winning - across the country, from small municipal offices right up to the 2018 Congressional midterm elections.

In 2020, our focus was on Getting Out the Vote for the November elections, so we organized a motivational rally on Public Square. We have our FIRST woman vice president who is also a woman of color and woman of Asian descent. Our incoming president has already made a number of historic cabinet selections, including what will be the highest transgender official in the federal government, Dr. Rachel Levine, to be the assistant secretary of health.

We can relax and breathe, but only for a little while. We cannot become complacent as there are still many threats to our civil and human rights. I am always so proud to see that our All Souls community continues to show up and stand up (as they are able) for the rights of our global community.

Opinion Piece

News from the DMV:



A week or so ago I climbed and then stood atop a steep hill above the ruin of a 19th Century sandstone quarry. I am standing, an old woman, beside my friend, Mike, now an old man. I am on edge. I am trying to listen to his voice-- slight southern cadence--smooth and deep. I remember how I once ached for this sound—once 50 years ago. Today, we are

looking out at the Potomac, hoping some words will come to us to help us find each other in this old side of a lifetime.

He tells me he is training to be a school bus driver, his last job swept aside by the pandemic. He lets me know—sweetly—that he could probably train the trainer. He has been driving buses for decades: “I used to go with my mom. We would drive an old bus around to the centers and deliver lunches.” (His mother, Mary Hart, dead for decades now, was honored by one of these centers. Named after her, the Mary Hart Center is one of four Child Centers run by the State of Maryland. She was an activist by nature and a member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville.) When we say goodbye, a couple of hours later, he will hand me a paper ornament—one of many he makes each Christmas just as he and his mother once made. I feel jealousy rise in me; jealous of his open-hearted affection for his mother and his obvious comfort, too. He is of this place and I have been, away for too long, separated from a place of belonging. I feel sad for me. I remember that when I knew him all those years ago, I felt this same way—sad and separated.

I know that Mike lives in Mary's small house; the house where I first met him and we smoked cigarettes and touched each other and it's where, I find out, he ended his marriage. I'm listening as he speaks generously to me. He smiles when he talks about friends and family. There aren't a lot of words but a loving smile appears. I hear it. I'm not actually looking at it. We are looking out in front of us most of the time. I have no idea what might happen if I look him in the eye. Before the winter low midday sun abandons us, before we press on to look for something in the woods, and before he lets me know what he remembers about a visit he once made to me in Brooklyn, he tells me something I needed to share with you all. He tells me that the UU Church saved him. He didn't say it like that, he's not dramatic. He told me that no matter what was happening when he was growing up—being raised by a single mom in relative poverty and sometimes with cousins and in different places some safer than others—he “always knew I could go somewhere and someone would take me in and someone would feed me and I would be okay. I just had to find a UU church.” He said: “I knew that because that's what being part of the UU church taught me. Being a Unitarian meant I could always go somewhere and I would belong.”

Wow! That is what we are all about with those wonderful kids who come to church and whom we care for and about! It is possible to set the course of a human's life by just letting them experience the truth of being held without judgment, without question, and without motive beyond that of loving.

May it be so!!

-Veronica Hartman

Collector



Thank you for your financial gifts which help us to meet our ongoing expenses. I have been doing weekly reports in our Posts each Tuesday, but if you don't get them and have questions please contact me (1404 State St Watn 13601 or 315-782-6246 or warrenallen@verizon.net) and all questions will get answers.

Basically, our current pledges plus unpledged donations cover about half of our ongoing expenses, and the other half is covered by our earlier savings and donations from prior members and friends.

For the current July-through-June year, thirty-two families of supporters have pledged \$36,048. As of January 1, this fiscal year was half over and we have brought in \$19,326, or about fifty-four percent. Some of us were able to cover their whole pledge by last Fall, and by the middle of January, thirteen families have paid off their own pledge for this year, and some have already sent extra. Yea!!

Also, in separate fundraisers, \$225 has been donated to help support the UUA office at the United Nations. And many families have pitched in a total of \$155 to help fund the new stole which has helped celebrate Marty's new ordination. And many families have thus far pitched in a total of \$125 for the Minister's Fund, so that Marty can quickly help out with local emergency needs. Thanks for your generosity, while we face Covid socially distant and with cleaned hands!

Warren L. Allen, Collector

People News

Rev. David Weissbard is recovering at home from hip replacement surgery. The surgery itself went well, but then he dislocated it 4 weeks later.

Pastor Marty Pelham is now Reverend Marty Pelham, following his ordination Sunday, January 24. All Souls and First UU in Syracuse shared in the program. Rev. Marty planned the service, which included many religious professionals.

Around the Church

Building and Grounds

Reconstruction is almost completed.

Kitchen Countertop has been ordered and should be here in the next month or thereabout. Spoke with Stan Tibble's regarding Skylight. One of his foremen contracted Corona Virus and they had to shut down for two weeks, he hopes to (weather permitting) install next week. Overall, the work looks good and once the countertop is installed, we will need to do a final walk through to check all the items.

I stay in constant touch with Diego Aguilar our contractor to verify progress.

All the new appliances, microwave, stove hood and dishwasher are installed.

We will have to put together a walk through team when the countertop is installed.

Other items: office furniture is being finalized by Rebecca Carr, Harriet McMillan and Joanne Harter.

-Till Fritzsching

Newsletter/Post Merger?

There has been less content submitted for the Newsletter lately and Harriet floated the idea of merging the Newsletter with the Weekly Post. My opinion is that the newsletter should reflect the history of the church while the post should be more transient in nature. Both are needed. The reason there's less news now is that there's less news now. Not much going on.

In 2013 Rev Guy started the Weekly Post (initially the Shepherd's Post because he was an actual shepherd) and it was more in the nature of a message from him personally. Items about other events were related in the third person. Over time it got fancier with all kinds of art and inspirational quotes and stuff. I guess he had a lot of energy and enthusiasm at the time. Then it slowly transformed into being more about events going on as Rev Guy started just writing a weekly message at the end and Lauri, our long time office administrator, was filling in the rest. Rev Guy was no longer an actual shepherd since the barn on the sheep farm burned down and the longer message by the minister started being mostly in the newsletter. Then Lauri left and Carmen did the weekly post for a while and then Rev Guy left and it started being purely upcoming events. A summer later (in 2018), Carmen left and I started doing it because Pat clearly was not up to it. For a while I just kept to Carmen's format, but gradually made it my own with my own standardized format and contents. It has never been mailed out or printed, it has always been purely electronic.

The Newsletter, on the other hand, is sent electronically to most people though some people have requested it be mailed to them in hard copy, and some are also printed out for the lobby area and archives. It gives a snapshot not just of what programs will be going on coming up that people might be interested in participating in, but of what has *been* going on and what members of the church are feeling and doing. It relates the state of the church and people in the future should be able to look at it and see how we evolved. And it also is a tool for advertising the church, keeping people engaged. Sure, much that happens is reflected in minutes and reports, but the newsletter covers things that those don't. The newsletter goes back to at least 1985, right after the fire,

because I have scanned a collection of them starting then and going up through 1995. The first one says the newsletter "will be continuing" despite the building burning down the week before. Initially it was done by the congregational leadership, but eventually it was taken over by the Ghermanns, a couple who were full time ministers for a few years. When they left in 1995 the record stops. It had been every other week, and was printed on legal size paper, several pages nestled inside each other like an order of service. The record starts again in 2007 when Harriet started doing it in something very much like the current format. Apparently it had been intermittent for a time. I have scanned one from 2005 that was in a very different style, just two pages. That may have been a one off by someone doing it temporarily and experimenting, or it may have been an example of how it was being done. Anyway, Harriet has been doing the newsletter as it is since 2007 and I think it's something that should exist. . If it's shorter because there's less going on, it can be shorter.

For both, when there's no material, there's no material. There's no need to throw away the container just because there's nothing in it currently. This is a time to experiment, try editorials, try stories. What are your thoughts? Please let Harriet and me know what you think of the direction we should take. And submit material. I know you have more free time cooped up at home. Write something for us.

-Robert South

How to Donate to the UUSC



If you would like to make a donation to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), you can mail a check to: UUSC, PO Box 808, Newark, NJ 07101-0808. Or you can donate online at: donate.uusc.org. If you mention All Souls Watertown in the memo line or on the online form, our church will also get credited with your donation. Separately, you can learn more about the UUSC, and see some of the videos shown at last Sunday's service, [Jan. 24] by going to: www.uusc.org.

Would you Like?

The newly formed Outreach Team recently explored the idea of forming a knitting group via Zoom. I'm not sure how it would work, but we are wondering who would like to participate.

Also, we talked about forming a Book Club via Zoom. We have tried this when we could meet in person, with mixed success. I

If you are interested in either of these groups, contact Harriet McMillan, and we'll see where it goes.



Every Month at All Souls

CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)

At the present time, CUUPS is not active on a predictable basis, because the church is closed. Joanne Harter, the leader of the group, feels that meeting in person works best for them. Watch this space for information about the restart.

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 two organizations: Planned Parenthood of Northern New York and The Children's Home. Each organization will receive $\frac{1}{4}$ of the uncommitted plate collections.

Unitarian Universalist Association



A New Year's Message from Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray, President of the UUA

This New Year, only two weeks old, [Jan. 11] has already wrought terrible pain and disruption. I am still reeling from the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capitol by a white nationalist mob trying to stop the certification of the Electoral College. And we are learning of possible mob violence at state capitols nationwide this weekend and in D.C. leading to Inauguration Day.

Last Friday, the UUA issued a call for the removal and impeachment of President Trump and accountability for members of Congress who participated in and incited these attacks on our democracy.

This is all unfolding during the worst phase of the pandemic, with several thousand Americans dying every day. These realities are deeply traumatic. Fear and anger are normal responses. It is okay if you are not okay. I don't feel okay. Now is the time to lean into relationships of friendship, family and faith. Connect and share with others, make art and music, engage in practices that feed your soul, and offer to yourself and others gentleness, compassion and care.

As I rang in the New Year, I found my heart set on two things—remaining rooted in the values I hold most dear and praying for our democracy. In addition to praying, I know many

of us are asking, “What can I do?”

**30 Days of Love is a time to gather, learn from
each other and movement leaders, and listen
for the ways that love is calling us.**

At this moment, our leaders at UU the Vote and movement partners are asking people to stay home, stay safe, and continue to call your elected officials to demand accountability for the attacks on democracy. In addition, we continue to develop the skills and relationships we need to keep organizing for justice, equity, and democracy.

This weekend, [Jan. 17], with the honoring of Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday, the UUA kicks off our annual 30 Days of Love celebration. This is a time to gather and learn from each other and movement leaders, and listen for the ways that love is calling us to show up in the world and for each other.

This year, 30 Days of Love will focus on four themes from the Commission on Institutional Change’s report Widening the Circle of Concern, reminding us that liberation in the wider world is indelibly connected to liberation within ourselves. You can [find information here](#) about all of the events planned, culminating with a Side With Love Sunday worship service on February 14th that can be streamed in congregations.

Despite the devastating events of last week and the possibility of more violence, I remain hopeful and resolved. For in 2020, a year like no other, I witnessed the incredible courage so many people across the country—including members of our own congregations—showed to protect and expand democracy and work for a society where all people can thrive.

I am inspired by the ways we are growing our capacity for risk, for solidarity, and for community care. We have made a huge difference this year in the lives of our neighbors, in the care and protection of our communities, and in the strength of our democracy. This remains to me a source of hope and strength and joy. We are resilient. We have everything we need. We are enough. Love will continue to guide us.

Blessings to you all, your loved ones, and communities.



Virtual Evening Program!

Queer Eye Comes to Camp!

- Our incredible Program Staff are working hard to design an interactive Unirondack Evening Program that will be organized using the platform gather.town which will allow campers to create a character to roam around a virtual map to meet with staff in different stations and join in to activities and challenges. Queer Eye will take over Unirondack for the evening, providing us with stations for Culture, Beauty, Fashion, Home, and Cooking... And as always we have some unexpected Unirondack twists planned.

Thursday, February 4 at 8pm

The cost is a sliding scale of \$4-\$12. Pay what you are able and reach out if cost is prohibitive! These fees will cover program costs and staffing.

Monthly Campfire: February 1st!

Just a reminder that our Monthly Virtual Campfire is next Monday, February 1. If you know someone who might need a space of community to share their art, music, stories, or just a place to listen in and see what Unirondack is like, invite them in! Our campfires have been a beautiful reminder of the unique people that make our organization what it is. Join us next Monday!

All Souls UU Church Board of Trustees

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

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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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Watertown, NY 13601
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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.
- 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.