

ALL SOULS NEWS -June 2020
All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church
1330 Gotham St.
Watertown, NY 13601



315-788-2742 www.all soulsuu.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"

June 7 – Pastor Marty Pelham: Covenant is the difference between belonging and fitting in. Some describe Unitarian Universalist as having a theology of relationship or one of healing disconnections. What does that mean in practice? How can we nurture and maintain a covenantal community?

June 14 - Pastor Marty Pelham: "A Blessed Bundle of Weeds." We have all experienced feeling like a weed – “a plant in the wrong place” – at some point in time, but the term is all about perspective. As we celebrate our annual Flower Communion, we share the beauty of our diversity and the joy of celebrating our whole selves.

June 21 – Frances Mercer; “How can UU’s help create a balanced role for faith in American public life?” Rev. David Weissbard in his May 10th service entitled “The American Taliban” argued convincingly that the separation of church and state is critical to American democracy and that American democracy and religious freedom are being threatened not by external Taliban



Rooted, Inspired, & Ready!

extremists but by internal American religious intolerance, failure to defend the rights of all faith traditions, and insistence by some that America is or should be a “Christian state.” After hearing this sermon, my response was what can we do as individuals and as UU’s? In this presentation, I plan to highlight the analyses and recommendations of attorney and scholar Melissa Rogers (former Special Assistant to President Barack Obama and former Executive Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships) presented in her 2019 book, *Faith in American Public Life*.

June 28 - Joanne Harter: “Blessing of the Animals.” Our traditional end of the service will continue this year, but via Zoom. For some of our pets, this will allow a stress-free way to participate. Details will appear in the Weekly Post.

Summer Services

Traditionally, our summer services have been lay led and less formal than the winter ones. It's an opportunity for members of the congregation to lead a service on a topic that interests them with help from the worship committee as needed. This year will be similar with the exception that the services will be by zoom. In the past, we've had someone choose a short reading followed by discussion. We've had poetry readings. It can be anything your imagination creates! And the UUA has developed resources for use during the pandemic: <http://www.uua.org/worship>

I'll kick off the informal summer services on Sunday July 5th. Recently, Robert South led an intriguing service about the need to settle conflict without war, and the complications this would entail. Many of us stayed online after that service for further discussion. I think it will be appropriate to continue this discussion on July 5th with additional points of view, during the Independence Day holiday weekend.

We'll need eight more volunteers for the remaining Sundays in July and August! If interested, please contact Eleanor Allen at wezallen11@gmail.com. Thanks!

News from the Wondering Center for June 2020

A warm hello to all the children from Frances and Chris. We have missed seeing you, talking with you, and doing with you for these many weeks that we have not been able to be together face to face.

We hope you have all been well. Unfortunately, we probably will not be together at the church on Sundays during June either. Well the theme for June presented and discussed in the *RE-Frigerator Page* is “*Mistakes and Failures*”. The writers of the “*Page*” admit “*Mistakes and Failures*” is not a very cheerful theme, but they insist “...mistakes and failures are a big part of life for everyone. And while they never feel good at the time, they can be some of our greatest learning opportunities.” We are going through a terrible time of health and economic struggles



as we try to deal with the Coronavirus, COVID-19. It's hard to know what to do and to consistently do what we have been told is necessary. Learning from mistakes and failures is going to be an important part of our lives during this terrible time.

In the *RE-Frigerator Page* we are also reminded that "Science is actually a process that depends on what looks like failure—you test an idea and see if your guess is backed up by the evidence. Often it isn't, and so you re-think and try again. We get more knowledge by testing what we think might be true, and finding out we were wrong is as important to the process as finding out that we were right. Humanism teaches us to keep testing and learning and growing, and to never assume that we already have all the answers." Many are saying that we have to use science, evidence, good data and loving kindness to deal with the Coronavirus crisis.

During June, I will be creating a lesson for each week and mail or delivery it to your home. I welcome suggestions and feedback from you and your families. I have noticed that some of you are sharing in Joys and Concerns during our on-line Sunday services which is great—keep it up. Perhaps during June we can also share some time together by being outside in talking circles, staying six feet apart and with face coverings. You can contact me by phone (315-788-4508) or email (fmercer@twcny.rr.com) to say hi or share your ideas/suggestions.

-Frances Mercer

Art and Altar

Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, all church events, including services, have been virtual. Our committee members have not entered the building. A creative altar decoration may be in the offing when we move our services back from our individual homes to our actual church home.

2020 Annual Meeting

The COVID 19 pandemic has led the State of New York to issue executive orders mandating social distancing, and it has led the UUA to issue guidance to the same effect. Accordingly, All Souls has cancelled almost all building use and has been conducting worship services and other activities on the Zoom video conference platform. We're doing things through the computer. The

board has decided to do the annual meeting the same way. There has been extended discussion about the legalities, as well as inquiries to and meetings with higher levels in the UUA. Our bylaws call for us to have the annual meeting on the second Sunday of June. State law requires that meetings be "in person." But it turns out that the common understanding of "in person" is not

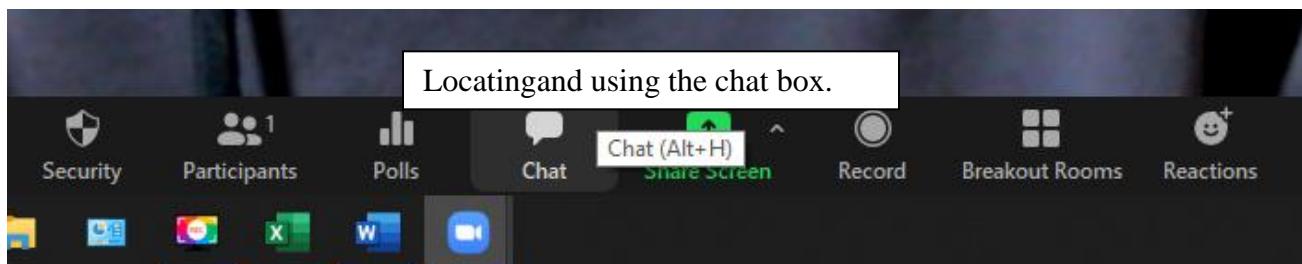
technically the only interpretation. We normally think it means “physically nearby.” But, in this context, it can mean “not through a representative.” For example, corporations have annual meetings in which all stockholders are invited to come and vote on corporate governance. Most people who own a little stock aren’t going to travel to the corporate headquarters so they can vote their thousand shares or whatever. Instead, we send a “proxy” form, which is sort of like an absentee ballot. But what it really means is that someone else will represent you at the corporate meeting and vote your shares as you have instructed them to. Similarly, if you go to court and represent yourself instead of hiring a lawyer, that is called representing yourself “in person.” Right now courts are being held by video conference, and no doubt there are people representing themselves, and that technically is “in person.” However, our bylaws require us to inform all members about the time and place of the annual meeting (yes, I send postcards to everybody who has ever signed the book—under the current bylaws). Normally, we give the place as the church address, 1330 Gotham, but this annual meeting will be at 11 am on June 14th in the State of New York. Yes, that’s a big place. Think of it this way. We’re having

our meeting in a big sports stadium. It’s hard to see and hear each other, so we may need to use binoculars and megaphones. Zoom software is like those binoculars and megaphones. It isn’t a representative, just a tool so we can see and hear each other.

The voting mechanics may be problematic. For non-secret votes we could all just hold up our hands, or those signs we’ve been using that say “YES” on one side and “NO” on the other. Zoom has an equivalent, and it even has a “survey” function. But there are problems with that. One is that sometimes we have two people on one computer. Another is that some votes that have to be secret, like last year when we had three candidates for two trustee positions and had to make anonymous ballots for the nominating committee to count. So, the board has discussed these issues and decided that the solution is to use the private chat function on Zoom to send our votes to Pastor Marty. Couples at the same computer could take turns or send a message like, “one for, one against.” This system is just using a tool, no different from the placards or the paper ballots. Our Pastor is the most neutral possible person to do the vote counting and is trustworthy.

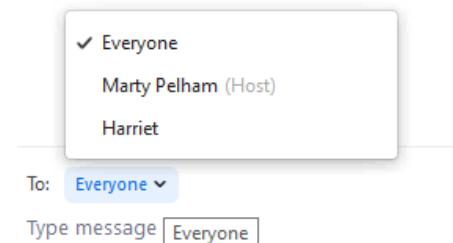
Here's how to use the chat, if you've never tried it. Look for the chat button. On my computer you see it by guiding your cursor down almost to the bottom of the screen, which makes a row of "buttons" show up. Pick the one that looks like a dialogue balloon in a comic book.

member has already been participating in zoom meetings. So my attending from the physical church location would be pointless. Besides, I'm also the host of the meeting and I have a much better computer at home, one that can show me up to 49 people at once. I'll have my hands full and don't need to be



It's marked "chat" and it makes a chat box appear. On my computer it's in the lower right hand corner. Here you can see all the messages other people have sent to you or to everyone, and you can send messages to everyone or you can click on the word "everyone" and get a drop down menu allowing you to select someone to send a message to privately. Then you type the message in the field underneath and hit Enter.

I originally intended to offer to attend the Zoom meeting from the church building. I was going to offer to be up there ready to help people participate by setting them up with one of the computers at church. It would be possible to do that with some social distancing if preparations were made. But I changed my mind when I realized that every voting



helping people with their zoom at the same time. If some voting member in fact does need help with a computer to participate, I'm ready to reconsider my plans.

And that comes to the next item: voting members. Voting members are people who have signed the member book and made a contribution of record within the fiscal year. We get the list of them from Warren, the collector. Amounts are not included. Please sign the book if you have made a contribution. Please, make a contribution if you have signed the book. Become a

voting member. We might need you to make quorum.

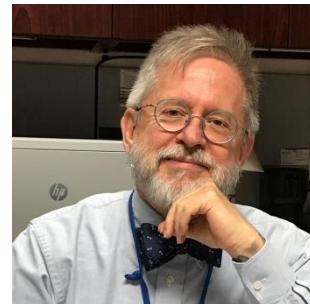
This meeting is important. We have a lot of important issues to deal with. There are major bylaw revisions being proposed. These are attached to the annual report, which will be sent out about the same time as this newsletter. One of the changes is to stop requiring the Secretary to send Annual Meeting notices to everyone who has ever signed the member

book, only to actual voting members. There's a proposal to roll over the budget, rather than create a totally new one at this time of uncertainty (and frankly less money). And there are the usual officer and trustee elections (which will be a large change this year because so many people are reaching term limits or moving).

-Robert South

Pastor Marty Perpends

I am grateful that so many of us are able to gather on Sunday mornings online. I am grateful that some businesses are beginning to reopen in a modified form. We know that congregational worship involving more than ten people may be possible in New York State in the fourth phase of re-opening and will likely include significant rules and restrictions. UUA President Susan Frederick-Gray's letter of May 14 advises congregations to not plan to gather in person for worship for an entire year. If you have not read her letter or the UUA guidelines on gathering in person as the pandemic subsides, I encourage to access them: <https://www.uua.org/pressroom/press-releases/message-uua-president-updated-guidance-gathering> and <https://www.uua.org/safe/pandemics/gathering-guidance>.



We are an energetic and resourceful community, we deeply miss the experience of gathering in physical proximity, and as we look forward, I expect we will come up with many ideas of how we can modify how we operate.

Back on February 16 my sermon was titled "Who Belongs Here?" and I talked about the concept of preemptive radical inclusion as being prepared to welcome everyone who we envision as part of our community, even if they are not physically present right now. I think we should keep that idea in mind as we plan the future year. I believe we should not physically gather until we can do so in a manner which is safe for every single person who might want to be present.

I encourage you to ask: "How can I help in the next year?" Will you consider digitally hosting a small group meeting every week? If telephones are more your style, can you help with a telephone tree to make sure we are staying in touch with everyone on a regular basis? Maybe you can help us design a new cleaning protocol for when we are able to start gathering again? Can you help create PowerPoint slides for worship or search for YouTube videos we can use or write chalice lightings words or be a greeter on Sunday morning Zoom? Maybe you have an idea for a service project which can help people outside of our congregation?

Now that both CNY and the North Country have begun reopening, I can drive to Watertown again. While I won't be holding office hours at our building until we can come up with a new healthy building protocol, I am happy to drive to your home and visit in the driveway or front porch or back yard. Call, text, or email me if you're interested. We can also meet by Zoom.

Since half of my weekly office hours have moved from Friday to Thursday, I am also making a change in the second weekly Zoom gathering. **Beginning June 1, the Breathe meditation gathering on Friday will end and a Brunch gathering will begin on Thursdays at 10 a.m.** The link for the new gathering will be: <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/97347721580>.

From the President's Desk

Two years ago I posted a wish list on the white board in the meeting room (now our temporary office.) And since the wish list is posted at the church, I can't right now access it. With one month left to go in my third year as president, I'm sorry to say I didn't accomplish all the items. And when I pass the gavel, the new president can post his/her/their own wish list.

It's been 3 intense years: one minister left, another came, we had to replace our Office Administrator, sexton and musician, and we had a major disaster with which to deal.

I've had a lot of help along the way: two ministers who have been willing to listen and provide another (and professional) point of view, a board very willing to invest time and energy into life on the board, and a supportive congregation. So maybe I had made an unrealistic wish list...

There will be many challenges in our future, challenges that need to be met so we can concentrate on what really matters: our people and our outreach. We are up to it!



Photo by April Huff

People News

Drive-by Baby Shower for Shannon



We had planned a baby shower in April for Shannon and her family, but Covid 19 changed our plans. Instead we planned a drive by shower at her home Saturday, May 23. We met at a parking lot and one by one drove by her home, leaving off our balloons and presents. All of her family was there to enjoy the event. The baby is due in mid-June.

Thanks to Sarah O'Connell and Rebecca Carr for the photos.





From the Historian's Files

It's 100 years in 2020 since the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed giving women the right to vote. Our local PBS station will be airing a two night special in July in "The American Experience" series called "The Vote." From the beginning of the suffragist movement, Unitarian and Universalist women have been featured prominently. This is a great message as we look toward the national elections in November.



Around the Church

Newsletter Appeal

I've completed the project of scanning and assembling all the old Annual Reports and Board Minutes. They extend consistently back to the fire in 1984 and spottily back to 1978. The next project is to assemble all the newsletters in electronic form, either the files they were made from or scans of hard copies. I found a comprehensive stack of newsletters from February 1985 to June 1995 and am in the process of scanning them. In fall 2012 Laurie started saving all the newsletters on the computer and hard copies in binders. Between those dates (June 1995 and September 2012) I have only October 2010, July 2005, and all of 2007. If anyone has any of the files or paper newsletters from those dates I am missing, I would very much like to get copies of the files, or loans of the hardcopies for scanning.

Incidentally, the newsletters from the period from '85 to '95 are really interesting. Many of the sermon titles, activities, and discussion topics all sound well worth doing again.

-Robert South



Chalice Circle CUUPS

Chalice Circle CUUPS is dipping a toe into the ZOOM meeting process, and should have had our first session on May 26. Leave your contact information on our Chalice Circle CUUPS of Watertown NY Facebook page or Messenger if you are interested in the June 9 or June 23 meetings, and you will be provided with the necessary link.

Buildings and Grounds

05/18/2020

As we all struggle through the pandemic and our wonderful church cloistered I do have some encouraging news.

We are very close to a settlement with our insurance company, Church Mutual, a summary is below (3s are rounded):

Building Damage \$93,000.00 (\$65,000.00 check cut, \$28,000.00 draw account for expense above and beyond)

Contents \$30,000.00

Organ (Pending, evaluation being done as of this writing)

Total \$123,000.00 (not including organ which is pending)

Other news, the ADA bathroom now has a ‘Vacant/Occupied’ indicator deadbolt installed which can be operated from the inside for privacy concerns. An emergency key will be located in a secure location to facilitate any need to get in while occupied.

Buckthorn abatement. Robert has been working diligently to clear back the buckthorn trees and we are now in cleanup mode. We will need to have the leftover stumps ground flush to the ground to facilitate planting a lawn where the trees have been removed.

We have a bid for \$1800.00 to \$2300.00 to do the grinding, the \$ range is dependent on whether or not we need/want topsoil brought in after the grinding. I would like to recommend a group of volunteers to help with cleanup of the area before we grind the stumps, fallen limbs, rocks etc. to prepare the area for the new lawn. Robert has shouldered most of the burden himself, so let's see if we can give a hand.

Thanks!

Any questions see me.

Till Fritzsching, Chair, B&G committee

Every Month at All Souls

CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)

meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at the church. Gathering and chatting begins at 6:30, the meeting begins at 7 PM.

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 three organizations: North Country Public Radio, Worker's Center of CNY, and Jefferson County Victims' Assistance Center. Each organization receives 1/6 of the uncommitted funds for the year.

Unitarian Universalist Association

A Letter from Rev. Lauren Smith of the UUA

As we navigate these demanding days, it's easy to feel that we are not enough, that we are not doing enough. If you are among those who wrestle with this anxiety, know that you are in good company. The most gifted leaders I know, both lay and professional, are wrestling with it, too.

Thank you for being in the fray, for responding to these uncertain times with whatever measure of wisdom, creativity and courage is at your disposal. This is messy work.

Two months ago, our congregations shifted gears rapidly in response to the emerging public health crisis. The needs were immediate: How can we produce services online? Who needs help in the community? What should we do about our spring pledge drive?

Take another big breath. **We're at a transitional point in the current crisis.** As we pass the two-month mark, it is appropriate to shift to long-term planning.

The reality is, it may take a year or more for our congregations to fully re-open. UUA President Susan Frederick-Gray advised UU leaders last week that [the UUA recommends congregations plan for virtual operations through May 31, 2021](#). While there is much public conversation about "reopening," public health officials consistently predict a long trajectory for this pandemic.

Our hope is that by naming this heartbreak reality, we can encourage congregations to plan ahead and **imagine the coming year in collaborative, spacious and creative ways.** If conditions are such that congregations can open safely sooner than we expect, we will all celebrate together.

[UUA regional staff](#) are at the ready to help congregations work through the challenges and opportunities of the coming year. Together, we will guide our beloved communities through these difficult days.

Together, our communities will continue to serve the greater good.

All Souls UU Church Board of Trustees

President: Harriet McMillan harriettm@allsoulsuu.org
Frost
Secretary: Robert South roberts.asuuc@gmail.com
Treasurer: Eleanor Allen eleanora.asuuc@gmail.com
Trustee: Rebecca Carr rebeccac.asuuc@gmail.com
Trustee: Shannon Starkweather-Burke
Mercer
Trustee: Catherine Burns catherineb.asuuc@gmail.com
Trustee: Heather Winn heatherw.asuuc@gmail.corg

Staff

Office Administrator: Glenda
Music: Toni Zygadlo
Sexton: Christ Coughlin
Childcare: Chris Coughlin
Religious Education: Frances

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

Newsletter Editor, Harriet McMillan, harriettm@allsoulsuu.org

Office Administrator M, W, F, 10-1

Phone (315) 788-2742

E-mail: allsoulsuuchurch@gmail

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 June 2020

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.