

Issue

September 2020

The Foreword



UU AMHERST

*Fostering Justice
and Compassion*

The Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Amherst
6320 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221
634-3010 (x101 for office)
Office Hours Tues.—Fri. 9am to 2pm www.uuamherst.org

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Minister Emerita

Rev. Maureen Q. Thitchener

SUNDAY SERVICES SEPTEMBER AT 10:30 AM

Our Sunday services continue to be available online. Go to YouTube.com and our channel (UU Amherst). A link is also available on our website. You can view the recorded service anytime on our YouTube channel. Invite friends and family to church! A Watch Party/Service/Coffee Hour takes place on Zoom at 10:30 am. Meeting information is sent out by email prior to each Sunday service to join.

September 6 Everyday Awe Scott Harrigan

Awe is something that we associate with the very big, say the stars or mountains, but can we feel awe at the very small? Awe is when we have that "eureka," a knowledge of how something really is, appreciate its importance, and can begin to feel gratitude that something or someone is in our lives. Maybe those little things aren't so little after all? Let's explore how being open to everyday awe can make our lives more fulfilling.

September 13 Annual Ingathering Service Rev. Michelle

Each year we begin the new church cycle by mingling our waters together. Although our mingling will be virtual, we will honor the deep connectedness of our lives.

September 20 Our Lives Flow On in Endless Song Rev. Michelle

A celebration of the renewing power of finding our own song.

September 27 To Bless the World Rev. Michelle

Let's try again for this service! Send photos of you with your pet(s), with a note or description to minister@uuamherst.org by 9/15. A socially-distant animal blessing will be one element in this service. (The pictures can be from the past as well as the present.) For those among us who love animals but are not able to have a pet, this will be a great treat and comfort. Let's bless one another in this way.

Our Covenant

*Together we promise:
To gather in compassionate
community,
To celebrate diversity of thought and
unity of spirit;
And to seek wholeness for ourselves,
our children, and our world.*

MINISTER'S CORNER

"We are all longing to go home to some place we have never been - a place, half-remembered, and half-envisioned we can only catch glimpses of from time to time." (Starhawk)



I've always found this reading by Starhawk to be poignant - an apt description of the search to find one's 'tribe' - the people who will see us more truly, and will love us. This season, as we begin a new church year, I feel that longing for connection and community even more deeply. At a time when we miss the buzz of conversation in the Emerson Room, may our communication on Zoom, in cards and emails, and muffled through masks, be meaningful and heartfelt. Although it is not possible for us to lift voices and sing together, may the music of memory sustain us and weave the tender threads of community. None of us is alone.

Let us seek a renewal of our spirits as we renew our covenant, our sacred promise.

Together we promise:

To gather in compassionate community;

To celebrate diversity of thought and unity of spirit;

And to seek wholeness for ourselves, our children, and our world.

May it be so.

Rev. Michelle

PS - An update on what is happening with my family: My mom has been placed in memory care (Elderwood at Amherst) and my father will spend his remaining months living with Les and me. The cats are very excited about another lap to perch on; my dad, not so much! Our daughter continues to thrive as she knits two little people into life.

Shared Caring Circle Resumes

The Saturday morning Shared Caring Circle will resume on September 12th at 9:30 am. All are welcome. See the Friday Weekly Update for the Zoom invitation. Note that pass codes and waiting rooms are in effect.

Help When You Need It

This is a reminder that if you are experiencing financial hardship, you can reach out to Rev. Michelle (minister@uuamherst.org) for assistance from the Minister's Discretionary Fund. This Fund is made possible by the generosity of fellow congregants, and just one more way we demonstrate that no one is alone. We care for one another.

Don't forget to call your minister!

With health privacy laws, hospitals no longer call churches to let us know when someone has been hospitalized - so it is up to you to contact us if you or someone you know is experiencing health challenges and may want to be contacted. When in doubt, call!

MINISTER'S HOURS*

*Rev. Michelle is currently working primarily from home. Please contact her by email if you have a question. minister@uuamherst.org.

Tuesday-Thursday

Monday: Writing

Friday: Off

HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT?

Email: administrator@uuamherst.org

For Newsletter: by 10:00 am on the 16th

For Order of Service: by 10:00 am Wed prior

For Website: two weeks prior to event

For all church list serve: daily during the week.

For Weekly Update: Fridays by 10:00 am

Administrator/Office Hours:

Tuesday through Friday—9:00 am to 2:00 pm

BOARD REPORT

Happy Summer! It's so nice to be able to get outdoors in the sun and refresh. I hope you are all having the opportunity to enjoy nature and get outdoors as often as possible. An activity you might like is a bingo game on the www.bnwaterkeeper.org website. It gets you out and about and exploring aquatic areas and our natural resources as a family or with friends.

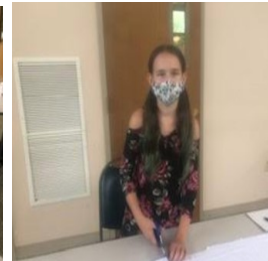


Today, I was lucky enough to spend the day on Lake Ontario. It was overcast but just wonderful to feel the lake breeze and watch the seagulls diving for fish. It was revitalizing and relaxing at the same time.

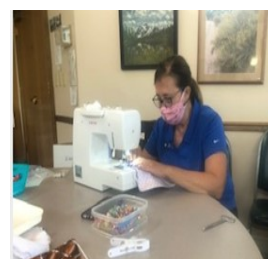
During this time of disruption, I would like to acknowledge how lucky we have been to have the support of Rev. Renee Ruchotzke. When the congregation voted to be an "honor congregation" by paying our full fair share to UUA, we receive amazing levels of support. Rev. Renee helped with our Board Retreat, stepped in to do a sermon, recorded and edited the Story for All Ages, and gave mountains of support during Rev. Michelle's absence. Renee even assisted on her birthday! It was great to have a someone to reach to as a new board chair.

The Board has created a medical re-opening team to guide us through this pandemic with the safety of our members and staff at the forefront. The following people are part of this medical advisory team: Bruce Becker (facilitator/chair), Dr. Don Tucker, Dr. Tom Langon, Dr. Barbara Gauger-Kent, Dr. Rosalind Sulaiman, Dr. Laurie Kasnicki, and Suzanne Christ, RN. Ultimately decisions lie with the Board of Trustees, but their professional guidance is of paramount importance.

The board allowed a "one time" special use of the Emerson Room where a team came together to sew face coverings for the pantry users. We have had a concern with those using the pantry not wearing masks. We want to make sure that not only are our clients safe, but that our church members who stock the pantry are protected as well.



Dr. Don Tucker came in early and sanitized the area, participants signed in and went through temperature checks, each time the bathroom was used, it was sanitized and all participants were socially distanced and each wore face coverings. Don also brought in three air filtration units. A special thank you to: Dian Tucker, Marge Marcille, Emily and Lydia Garrett, Linda Gardner, Joann Shafer, Marlana Rice and Karen Thompson for creating 19 masks for our pantry.



This one-time use was an experiment to develop a protocol for future usage. It was also a task that was needed for the safety and well-being of our church community and those who use the pantry. Currently, there are still no meeting or events inside the church and we are still at stage one outdoor usage until further notice. We appreciate your patience as we navigate these challenging times together.

Welcome Back to Rev. Michelle. We are happy to have you back with us!

We are in challenging and uncertain times. We need to stay connected to this beloved community through our personal connections and the villages. It is now, more than ever, that we need each other and to have one another's back. Please take loving care of yourself and your families.

Karen Thompson
On behalf of the UU Amherst Board of Trustees

BOARD COMMITTEES & FOCUS AREAS

Board members will be serving on the following Committees: Finance: Emily Garrett and Karen Thompson; Facilities: Don Tucker and Scott Harrigan; Committee on Mission: Jeanine Moyer; Personnel: Don Tucker; Nominating and Leadership: Laurie Kasnicki and Endowment Trust Liaison: Wendy Scott.

The Board has chosen three areas to focus on this year: Reattaining Green Sanctuary status and expanding green initiatives, Campus (facilities) plan development, signage for the church. We look forward to sharing more in the days and weeks ahead!



USE OF OUTDOOR SPACES

In July, the Board drafted a document outlining standards for use of outdoor spaces by church members. Following are the guidelines that members are being asked to adhere to until further notice:

Stage 1: Outdoor Use of UU Amherst Grounds by Groups/Teams of UUCA

As part of a staged re-opening, the board has implemented the following standards to maintain the health and safety of the congregation and the day care.

- The convener (church member) of the meeting must sign up for an outdoor space through the church office at 716-634-3010 at least 2 days prior to the meeting, **Note: Office hours are Tues—Friday, 9:00 am—2:00 pm.** Please plan ahead as summer hours may be erratic.
- The convener is responsible for the group and must make sure that the attendees follow these guidelines.
- **Group size:** must be within the current NYS/CDC guidelines.
- Social distancing is in effect (no closer than 6 feet).
- Masks are encouraged on church property, and if social distancing is not possible, their use is mandatory.
- Chairs will not be provided by the church. We cannot guarantee that they are disinfected. People will need to bring their own chairs for their meeting.
- No one may enter the building. The restrooms are not available.

Stage 1: Exception: Authorized people

Authorized People are those who have come for church business i.e., (Board members, pantry volunteers, team chairs who come in for mail, etc.). This includes those that have a key or code to enter the building. It is your responsibility to not share it with others or use it to allow others into the building who are not there for essential church business.

There is a sign-in log book at each entrance. Please fill out each time you enter. This will help assist with contact tracing should it be needed.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Our Faith Development Team met at length on Saturday August 22nd via Zoom for fellowship and planning. We spent some time going over our covenant. The second statement of the covenant seems specifically centering at this time: "To serve the changing needs of our current and future members, we will be willing to take courageous risks, experiment, evaluate and empower our leaders, knowing that failure and imperfection will lead toward learning and growth." WOW! That's a BIG statement.

Changing needs have always been a priority for the Religious Education/FD program at UU Amherst. The sudden and entire changes that the pandemic is causing make what we do here more challenging, especially if we attempt to begin without seeing around the huge corner of reopening schools. It is impossible to be aware of what may come next. There is no way to tell. The uncertainty is poignant. Decisions won't be perfect.

What we are able to do is to focus on renewing our relationships within this beloved community and to explore new ways of interacting with one another. We can even reach out to smaller UU communities to see if we might be comfort and fellowship for the children and youth of their communities.

We are able to virtually interact in order to build modified programming that we all can learn and grow from, but we will take our time to explore what fits best for our growing children and youth, knowing that the best results will come from their leadership and our encouragement of that leadership.

Be looking for Spirit Play within our services throughout the year. What do we teach our littles and everyone else who listens through these stories that inform our liberal faith? What about the wondering questions?

I wonder. . . as we approach this new program year, what ideas will ignite passion and enthusiasm that will carry us through this liminal space? If we do have time and space for church, what is that time for: Activism? Appreciation and use of our property? Religious instruction for children and adults? Just being able to be together, even while physically apart?

Stay tuned for details on specific directions regarding Faith Development as our teaching groups meet through the month of September.

As assistant director of the Fahs collaborative for Meadville Lombard Theological school Joy Berry says, "This time in the goo [the chrysalis time] is important; it is not a holding pattern, it is not something we're waiting out. It is the space where we build the church that is to come and many of us will be able to bring our whole selves and our big ideas to the church that will be born from this time because many many constraints will have been lifted because we'll know how to be better together."

Yes, let us continue to be moved to be better together.
Truly yours, Angela Warren, DFD

Hope for Challenging Times by Chelsea Warren

As Chelsea prepared to graduate with her associates of fine arts this past Spring, she made some decisions about final projects and about the direction of her life. Read about how this beloved community was a support to her, and how her art piece shows our support and love for one another (Thank you, Chelsea, and thank you, UU Amherst, for uniting in the endeavor to capture this moment in time and our history together, past, present, and future. Faithfully submitted by Angela Warren (very fortunate mother of Chelsea, and very grateful servant of this congregation). To access the document, enter the URL in your browser:
<https://bit.ly/3jbZ1tx>



GOOGLE CALENDAR

PLEASE NOTE: Starting September 27th, all Zoom meetings scheduled in the UU Amherst room (or any paid account) must assign a passcode. For any group that is using the Zadmin meeting room, you will receive a new invitation that includes the passcode from the Office Administrator. Individual members using their own Zoom accounts will not require passcodes. Zoom links are provided by group hosts via email. **If you want to join a Zoom meeting and haven't received a link, please contact the meeting host.**

Sunday, September 13

12:00 pm: Poetry as Practice, D. Bofinger

Sunday, September 27

12:00 pm: UU Amherst Book Group* Zadmin

*pass code required

Discussing the book "Bellevue" by David Oshinski

Recurring:

Sundays, September 6-27 weekly

10:30: Online Church service

(join via UUAmherst website link or UU Amherst YouTube channel)

10:30 am: Watch Party/Service/Coffee Hour - Zoom

1:00 pm: Youth Group Zfd

2:00 pm: Red Bud 5 (weekly) K. Thompson

Mondays, September 7-28

7:00 pm: Lighthearted Larches (9/14 & 9/28) D. Tucker

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

7:30 pm: Marvelous Maples (9/7 & 9/21) D. Bofinger

Tuesdays, September 1-29

12:30 pm Women's Group Zadmin (weekly)

Wednesdays, September 2-30

11:00 am: Willow Village (9/2, 9/16 & 9/30*) Zadmin

J. Senders *will require a pass code starting 9/30

11:30 am: Northtowns Village Zadmin (weekly) Y. Stocker

6:30 pm: Cucumber Magnolia Zadmin (9/2, 9/16 & 9/30)

J. Rautenstrauch pass code required

Thursdays, September 3-24

12:00 pm: Lunch with Friends Zadmin (weekly)

Saturdays, September 5-26

9:30 am: (resumes Sept. 12) Shared Caring Circle (weekly)

Rev. Michelle; pass code required

7:00 pm: Birch Bunch Zadmin (weekly) M. Ceraulo &

Virginia Snider

*Check Google calendar for Sage Circle meetings

Google Members' Directory

The UU Amherst Directory can be found in a shared folder on Google. You do not need a Google account to access! If you did not receive an email invitation to view the directory, or need the link, please let Elaine know by phone or email. If you discover an error, or need to update your information, send an email to administrator@uuamherst.org or call the office at 634-3010. If you would prefer not to have your contact information visible in the Google shared directory, please let Elaine know and it can be removed.

Visitor Sign-In

UU Amherst has adopted a new visitor sign-in procedure to aid in contact tracing should the need arise. Everyone entering the building is asked to sign-in with the date and time (excluding staff). There is a binder for signing in located at each entrance. Please be sure to read the COVID questionnaire that is contained in the binder (do not write on it). If you have any of the symptoms on the questionnaire, we request that you not enter the building at this time. Then sign in the log book. In the event of COVID exposure to anyone who uses the church, we will be able to assist with contact tracing. It is a matter of health and safety.

NEWS FROM ENDOWMENT TRUST

Despite the Pandemic, the UUCA Endowment continues to meet and did so in July via zoom. Lauraine Marcus was elected for a second 5-year term, therefore there is no change in trustees. Officers are:

Chair	Marie Evans
Recording Secretary	Joe Rautenstrauch
Corresponding Secretary	Lauraine Marcus
Treasurer	Jerry Kent
Member at Large	Elaine Cusker

The Endowment meets on a quarterly schedule and the next meeting will be in October 20th via zoom, most likely at 6:00 pm. If you wish to attend, contact Marie Evans.

The Trustees are happy to report that the Endowment's invested funds have rebounded and are maintaining their value since the downturn that anyone involved in mutual funds experienced in the Spring. While donations in the memory of loved ones have slowed, some contributions have been received via on-line giving (Website), Amazon-Smile, and recently from interesting new source Mightycause!

As always, please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Best wishes and stay well.
Lauraine Marcus on behalf of Marie, Joe, Jerry and Elaine.

UU AMHERST THEATER LOVERS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we won't be doing any outings for the foreseeable future, but there are opportunities to enjoy the Buffalo theater scene both in person and on-line. Here are highlights, in chronological order. Check each company's website for more information. - Marie Evans



Shakespeare in Delaware Park's Intermezzo Season Touring Show - limited socially-distanced in-person seating available at Penn Dixie (8/26 and 9/2) or Artpark (9/5-6)

Ujima Company - #ArtThatHeals: Black Lives Matter, and #LornaCHillLove - NOW, on their YouTube page, bit.ly/ujimacoyoutube

Kavinoky Theatre has digital programming planned - music nights starting September 11 and a one-woman theatrical show beginning November 6.

Second Generation Theatre is offering digital theatrical education classes to students ages 6-16. Session 1 begins the week of September 14.

Irish Classical Theatre Company is producing "Sea Marks," which will be available for online purchase October 16 to November 1.

Jewish Repertory Theatre's virtual season begins November 5, and will feature five staged readings, available as online video for 21-days each. Subscriptions and single tickets are available (jewishrepertorytheatre.com).

Musicalfare has been presenting online Cabarets about once a month. Follow them on Facebook or Twitter, or visit the website musicalfare.com for upcoming shows.

Road Less Traveled will be creating digital programming this fall. Details aren't currently available.

CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER RECIPES Provided by Christine Boczarska and Faith Pham

Christine Boczarska and Faith Pham are sisters and dedicated members of our Caring For One Another group. They provide occasional meals to church members on an as-needed basis. With the meal they generally include a “goodie bag” and a card on behalf of the Caring Group. They often submit healthy recipes for the monthly *Foreword*. The recipes are easy and usually use fresh vegetables. In the past these have included vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and ethnic recipes. Many members have expressed their appreciation both for the meals and the recipes they have provided.

With the farmers’ gardens exploding with vegetables we need to take advantage of all the yummy goodness. These are two recipes that can be vegetarian, vegan and/or gluten free with very minor adjustments. They are good any time of year but particularly good now that the farmers’ markets are so full of fresh local vegetables. Each recipe can be a complete meal or a side to your choice of protein.

With all the fresh tomatoes now at farmers’ markets, it is the perfect time to make your own marinara sauce. Once made it is something you can use now as well as freeze for later use.

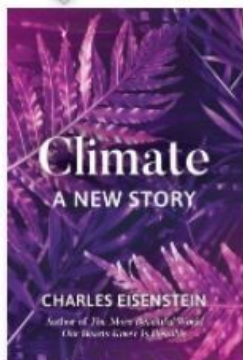
Marinara Sauce

3 Tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 lbs ripe tomatoes, chopped
(optional remove seeds and or skin)
1 large can of whole plum tomatoes, chopped
3 basil leaves, chopped
Salt and pepper
1 tsp sugar or 1 small grated carrot

In a large pot heat the oil on medium and add the onion, cooking until translucent, about 3-5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook 30 seconds more.

Add the chopped tomatoes, the canned tomatoes and basil. Cook on medium heat for about 1 hour.

Add salt and pepper to taste and either 1 tsp of sugar or 1 grated carrot to balance the acid of the sauce. Cook an additional 10 - 15 minutes to blend.



Let's read together!

Climate – A New Story

by Charles Eisenstein

Watch the Weekly Update for discussion opportunities, beginning the second week of September.

—Rev. Michelle

AMHERST LITTLE FREE PANTRY

We are pleased to tell you that the Amherst Little Free Pantry received a \$1,000 grant from Jolly Boys of Williamsville (a local civic organization). Kudos to Angela Warren, Director of Faith Development, for her assistance.

We are grateful to so many members of UUCA and Congregation Havurah for making financial and food contributions. We greatly appreciate your continued support as the Pantry is busier than ever.

Although the church remains closed, the Pantry remains open and has become a vital community resource.

Food donations can be left in the two large green bins in the back of the church outside by the back door for contact free drop off.



Financial contributions can be made online at the church website, uuamherst.org and click the Donate button. Be sure to select Pantry for your donation, which is one of the options.

Checks can also be sent to UUCA, 6320 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221 and write "Pantry" in the Memo line.

Here is what the Pantry especially needs this month:

BREAKFAST ITEMS, including cereal, milk (powdered, shelf-stable, or canned), protein or granola bars, pancake mix and syrup, protein drinks like Boost - also coffee, tea, hot chocolate packets; **BAKING** staples like flour, sugar, oil, baking mixes; **BEVERAGES** of all kinds (specifically requested by the pantry user who came by while I was there) including drink boxes, coffee and hot chocolate; **BEANS**—especially baked or refried; **FRUIT** (applesauce, fruit cocktail, or fruit slices - in pouches, canned, or individual-serving cups) ; **CANNED MEATS** other than tuna; **RAMEN**, **CANNED VEGETABLES** ,**RICE**, especially "instant" side dishes; **CONDIMENTS** - ie ketchup and mustard, either full size or "to-go" packets, including sweeteners; **TOILETRIES** - full or travel size, including dental floss, but especially shampoo, deodorant, and incontinence pads; **CLEANING SUPPLIES**, especially dish and laundry soaps; **INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED UTENSILS**, especially spoons; **CANNED PET FOOD**.

For questions or comments please contact Maria Ceraulo at amherstlittlefreepantry@uuamherst.org. Like us on Facebook: [amherstlittlefreepantry](https://www.facebook.com/amherstlittlefreepantry).



Because we could all use little humor right now....



What Is the Unitarian Universalist Association?

The UUA website contains a variety of information for members from articles and books, to news about current UUA happenings around the world. Here, in brief, is some background on the mission of the UUA from their website at uua.org. This is also a great resource for those who have friends asking about Unitarian Universalists and what they “believe”—point them to this website for in-depth information.

The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is to equip congregations for health and vitality, to support and train lay and professional leaders, and to advance Unitarian Universalist values in the world.

The UUA is the central organization for the Unitarian Universalist (UU) religious movement in the United States. The UUA’s 1000+ member congregations are committed to Seven Principles that include the worth of each person, the need for justice and compassion, and the right to choose one’s own beliefs.

Our faith tradition is diverse and inclusive. We grew from the union of two radical Christian groups: the Universalists, who organized in 1793, and the Unitarians, who organized in 1825. They joined to become the UUA in 1961. Across the globe, our legacy reaches back centuries to liberal religious pioneers in England, Poland, and Transylvania.

Each UU congregation is autonomous—congregational leaders set their own priorities and choose their own ministers and staff. Congregations vote for the leaders of the UUA, who oversee the central staff and resources. The UUA supports congregations in their work by training ministers, publishing books and the UU World magazine, providing religious education curricula, offering shared services, coordinating social justice activities, and more.

WE ARE:
ALL CONNECTED
STRONGER TOGETHER
LOVE’S HANDS IN THE WORLD
CALLED TO CREATE JUSTICE
RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE ANOTHER AND THE EARTH

 UUA.ORG/IMAGES

BOOKS FOR DISCUSSING RACISM

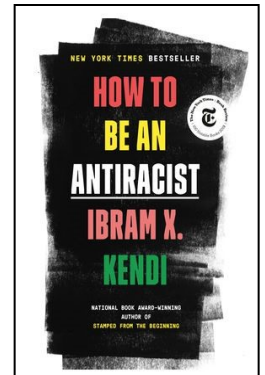
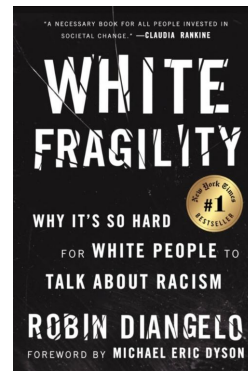
As the topic becomes more vital across the country, several online booksellers have compiled recommended books to address the issues of systemic racism in America. Below are a few links to help in researching the topic where you can read summaries.

A statement on the Powell Books website provides some context:

*No movement in recent history has exposed persistent civil rights violations the way **Black Lives Matter** has. In the words of its founders, "Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise." At its core, "The Black Lives Matter Network advocates for dignity, justice, and respect." These basic human rights are always worth fighting for, and now more than ever, it's important to stay informed.*

<https://www.booktable.net/black-lives-matter-reading-list>

<https://www.powells.com/post/lists/black-lives-matter-recommended-reading>



CONTRIBUTING TO UU AMHERST THROUGH E-GIVING

As we travel through this challenging time we invent and discover new ways to do what was traditional and simple; some things continue unabated. The expenses of supporting our beloved church continue. Our services and many programs continue in new ways supported by our incredible technology. So also our way of "passing the plate", "gathering our pledges" and so on now includes previously unexploited technologies.

The church has implemented **THREE** ways to give electronically:

1. The **Giving** option on the church website (uamherst.org)
2. A NEW phone app "**GivePlus+**" for your phone
3. Texting a donation to phone # **833 987 1968**
These methods complement the traditional methods:
4. Mailing a check [remember to fill in the Memo]
5. There is the traditional Sunday Plate - when you are in church!
6. Don't forget Legacy Giving – in your will

PLEASE NOTE: If you have not sent in a pledge card because you are not leaving the house to mail one, or you're not comfortable emailing, you can call the Office at 716-634-3010.



UU AMHERST

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH OF AMHERST

Fostering Justice and Compassion

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