



MINISTER'S CORNER

Do you have 20/20 vision? Not 20/20 hindsight (most of us can claim that), but 20/20 vision. Perhaps I should rephrase that: 20/20 VISION. Can you see the things that are close at hand as well as in the distance? Maybe you're better at big picture thinking, or really gifted with paying attention to details; we need both types of vision to grow and thrive as a congregation.

In the coming months we will be expanding and refining our vision of our purpose as a church, our relevance in the community (now and for the future), and how our ministries and activities underscore and celebrate our UU values. Warning: once you've seen something, you can't "unsee" it. We will be changed by this process. Hopefully the changes will bring us closer to sharing 20/20 VISION.

Bright blessings,
Rev. Michelle

NOTES & REMINDERS

Thank YOU!

Many thanks to all who responded to the call-out to replenish the Minister's Discretionary Fund. The Fund is back in a comfortable zone where I can respond to the financial needs of church members and friends, as well as folks from the community. These funds help bridge gaps between paychecks, make a dent in unexpected medical bills, and keep the heat and electricity on during the long, cold winter. In the past you have also helped a member with travel funds to visit a dying family member and say their goodbyes. The Fund enables me to purchase gift cards for places like Tim Hortons to provide a quick, hot meal, or to pay for a night or two in a motel for those who have nowhere to sleep. You make a difference in each of these lives with your generous contributions. Thank you. Truly, thank you. —Rev. Michelle

Summer Services: Preaching by Parishioners

The Preaching by Parishioners (PxP) program was established over 20 years ago by Rev. Carl Thitchener and a few dedicated congregants to provide meaningful worship services during the summer. This year Rev. Michelle will be bringing her decades of experience in public speaking and worship arts to guide participants through a process that begins with identifying your "burning coal" and developing that into a full blown worship service with a sermon and all the trimmings. The first session is January 15 at 7-8:30pm. Sessions run 1st and 3rd Wednesdays thru May 6. Contact minister@uuamherst.org or just show up to the first session. Participants are encouraged to commit to the full 8 sessions of instruction and feedback.

This is the Big One!

According to our calculations this year will be the 50th annual rummage sale at UU Amherst, and we are making big plans for a grand finale event. April 2020 will be the last rummage sale, making way for fresh ideas and renewed energy in fundraising and community service. Watch this space for details to come!

A Pink Slip Was Delivered

Yes, you read that correctly, a pink slip was delivered to Angela Warren, ending her role as acting Director of Faith Development. So that she could embrace the permanent position of Director of Faith Development! Angela has been AWESOME as she has guided Faith Development with the staunch support of the FD Team, ministerial intern Kristina Church, and the creative folks who have been helping with the first Sunday activities. In recognition of her great work and collaborative spirit in re-energizing Faith Development for all ages, the Board of Trustees voted at their December meeting to make her appointment permanent. Great news for all of us!

MINISTERIAL INTERN NOTES



Happy 2020! I hope the turning of the year finds you in good health and spirits. Thanks for all your support and encouragement in December, as I approached my interview with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee in Boston-- a rite of passage for anyone seeking to enter professional UU ministry. I'm happy to report that I passed, and have been welcomed into Preliminary Fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association. This is a huge milestone, as well as a great relief!

What's in store for 2020? Well, I'll be finishing up my time in seminary, and completing my final semester here at UUCA. We'll be finishing up the EJ (Environmental Justice) programming we began in October. We'll be reading and discussing *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, the UU Common Read for 2020. And we'll be thinking and talking about how this congregation wants to move forward with its Environmental Justice ministry.

I'm seeking to organize a group from UUCA to attend the Citizens' Climate Lobby northeast regional conference in Troy, New York, from March 6-8. The conference includes training on EJ political issues on a national level, as well as how to build bridges to other local groups in the fight for a healthy environment. The fees for attending are quite reasonable (early-bird pricing is \$95 for the three-day training, and students are \$25). We can carpool and also explore home hospitality options. I hope you'll consider joining us!

Here's a link to more information about the CCL regional conference: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-citizens-climate-northeast-regional-conference-tickets-84937886505>

Let me know if you're interested in this opportunity to dig into the work of Environmental Justice. In the meantime, see you at church!

Kristina

Rev. James E. Giles Biography

The Rev. James E. Giles is President of VOICE Buffalo – an organization that organizes for social and economic justice, and the Administrator for the Stop The Violence Coalition. He has been a strong force in the Restorative Justice movement and Prisoner Reentry for Erie County.

He sits on the Board of Directors for Catholic Charities, Child and Adolescent Treatment Services (CATS), City of Buffalo EMS Board and Youth Visionaries. He has received many awards for outstanding service to the community. He founded and developed Back To Basics Outreach Ministries, Inc. – a leader in Restorative Justice, Prisoner Re-entry, transitional housing, youth development and spiritual enrichment, as well as Gang and Anti Violence Initiatives.

His certifications from area colleges include Psychology (Niagara Community); Sociology/African American History (Buffalo State); and NYS Substance Abuse Counseling (Medaille). He is the Pastor of Greater Works Deliverance Fellowship which is part of the Dunamis Covenant Fellowship of Churches.

Pastor Giles has been a peacemaker and community leader in Buffalo for almost 40 years. His current work includes leading the Buffalo Peacemakers, an exciting new collaboration between six antiviolence groups – Back to Basics, Buffalo United Front, FATHERS, MADDADS, No More Tears, and Stop The Violence Coalition. The Buffalo Peacemakers Violence and Gang Intervention Program – proactive intervention into the cycle of violence in the lives of gang-involved or at-risk youth. In addition, he is also the Director of the SNUG program, a more intense Violence Interruption initiative.

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FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Visioning for 2020 and Beyond!

Welcome to the new year and to the third decade of the third millennium! Wow! As we forge into the future, we must embrace what is happening in the present, in our homes, in our beloved UUCA community, and in our larger community.

Much has been learned during this recent Advent Season through lessons on recycling offered by Devon Southall, Emma, and Grayson, with participation from our UUCA Youth. As UUs doing our best to live in to our 7th principle, to practice “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part,” we must continue to check ourselves and then question how we can be involved in making our surroundings, including our UUCA campus, a healthy and vibrant part of this complicated and intricately woven web.

There are so many social, racial, and environmental justice events going on in our community! This is a real signal that the Buffalo area is a progressive force in the midst of what often looks like a dismal future for our beloved Planet Earth. It is difficult to keep track of every possibility, and then to decide what to participate in, even as individuals. Compound the difficulty of individual decision with what is so affectionately referred to as “herding cats,” and you can begin to see why we may not participate as fully as we would like.

In the beginning of the program year, I created an editable calendar for FD and community events, with the hope that in viewing relevant events alongside our own programming, we could actually vision more clearly how UUCA can reach further into the wider community together. Please help us become more aware by participating in this initiative to calendar relevant events. Email suggested events to dfd@uuamherst.org. Access the calendar by going to <https://bit.ly/38RQnfu>. This will be ongoing.

Thank you all and Happy New Year!

Truly yours,
Angela Warren, Director of Faith Development



Crafts with the Minister

Are you looking for a way to connect in a different way with folks at church? Do you have a ‘crafty’ side? Would you like to help smash the patriarchy? If you answered ‘yes’ to any of these, you should come to a meet-up session on Saturday, January 4, 10:00 am to 11:30 am to explore the possibilities. Rev. Michelle has a crochet/knit project in mind and other ideas are encouraged as we engage in subversive conversation and crafts.

Lending Library

You may be familiar with the bargains in the Used Book area inside the donation room off our lobby, but did you know UUCA has a free Lending Library? Spiritual titles are in a glass cabinet in the Emerson Room (where we share coffee after Sunday service); it's between the windows looking out to the parking lot. There's a spiral notebook to sign out Materials, on the honor system. In the Living Room where the comfy couches are, there are Nature and Social Justice selections on the bookshelves in the corner. See Marie Evans if you have questions.



BOARD NOTES

Dear UUCA members and friends,

With the holidays and the New Year upon us, I'm reminded that I'm almost halfway through my term as Board Chair. It is sometimes frightening to realize how quickly time seems to pass! The Board set itself three goals for the year, and this is an opportune moment to review our progress. Here we go...



1. Arrive at a consensus regarding the future of the physical church.
2. We have conducted information sessions to inform the congregation about the issues with the buildings and grounds. While the facts are worrisome, feedback suggests that the membership is glad that we recognize the problem and are attempting to confront it.
3. We have formed a task force of about 10 people to move the renovation process forward. Others are welcome to join if interested.
4. We have received quotes from two architectural firms to perform a study of the facilities, to identify necessary repairs/renovations and estimate their costs. This may further include a visioning study to identify and rough-cost a building project.
5. In the near future, we aim to have informal small-group meetings with the congregation after services in January, to sketch out a long-term vision for the UUCA that will inform our development.
6. Bring to completion the marketing and welcoming goals laid out in the strategic plan.
7. We've made some changes to the foyer with the aim of making it more welcoming and informative to newcomers. This is still a work in progress.
8. We are assembling a task force to study and generate options for moving and replacing the church sign that sits near Main St. If you are interested in participating in the task force, send me an email or talk to one of the Trustees to let us know that you would like to be considered. We want a small but diverse group for this task, so consider what knowledge or skills you can bring to the effort.
9. The Marketing Task Force has started discussions (currently among themselves) about the church identity, name, brand, tag line, and other matters needed to give us a strong and recognizable identity. Anyone interested in getting involved is welcome.
10. Implement policy-based governance.
11. The Board has completed an initial draft of a policy manual, and I want to acknowledge Scott Harrigan for doing much of the detail work needed to bring this forward.
12. We have staffed our governance committees (Personnel, led by Randy Kent; Finance, led by John Thompson; Mission, led by Suzanne Christ; Nominating & Leadership Development, led by Marie Evans), and they have been very busy developing policies and procedures within their respective realms. The Ministry Teams have also been active.
13. Given how I consistently underestimate the rate of time's passage (in other words, how long it takes to get things done), it is hard to say how far we'll get with all of these goals by July, but I'm glad we're making some progress. This happens because of the efforts of some key people who are investing mightily their time and talent toward these goals.

Over Thanksgiving I traveled to Pittsburgh to see family, and took the opportunity to visit the Sunnyhill UU church. They have followed a path similar to the one we're embarking on, and it was very heartening to see how far they've come. They renovated their church (which included an old house) and have a beautiful and very functional facility now. They accomplished this in part due to a surprisingly successful capital campaign, and subsequently they increased their membership threefold (to about 300). It can happen.

I wish you all a holiday that is the best it can be.

David Kofke, Chair, on behalf of the UUCA Board of Trustees

GREEN SANCTUARY/CLIMATE JUSTICE

YEAH!! We have snow! Well, at least today. It can feel gray and unfriendly this time of year, so I like to get outside when it is clear and sunny to get some fresh air. Then we come inside and get a little Scandinavian cozy-ness going with blankets, candles, warm food and stories. After church on Sunday, January 26, from 11:45 am to 2ish, we are going to have a Winter Celebration to do just that! Think nature walks, bonfire, snow play (hopefully?), followed by a lunch with hot chocolate, soup, bread and pizza. It will wrap up with a winter read-aloud for the young or the young-at-heart featuring “Winter is the Warmest Season,” “The Snowy Day,” “Snowflake Bentley,” and others. This is going to be a “modified” potluck, where we ask folks to sign up and select to EITHER cook something (2 soups, pizza), do a job (bonfire tending, wash dishes, make hot chocolate, set up, clean up) or contribute a bit towards the costs (hot chocolate, bread, butter, etc.). That way the work is shared! Look for the sign-up sheets in the foyer on the glass block wall.

Enjoy!

Devon Southall



MUSIC NOTES: Looking for Music Enthusiasts

Once upon a time, there was a “Music Committee” which consisted of interested congregants who planned and put on concerts, coffee-houses, and more. We brought in some great music and had a lot of fun doing it. A new Music Celebration Team (under the Transformation Ministry in the new governance structure) is forming, and you can be part of it!

In addition to bringing in musicians for community-wide events, we are finding ways to engage UU Amherst folks in making music through instrumental ensembles, an informal singing group, and other short-term and continuing opportunities. We’ll gather some Sunday in January for lunch and brainstorming. Interested? Watch this space for details or contact Wendy Scott at scottw@buffalostate.edu or Kylie Keshav at kyl24ny@gmail.com.



Launch Party

January 12, 4:00 pm
Emerson Room

Contact Angela Warren to RSVP.

For the official toolkit, go to

[https://www.uua.org/sites/
live-new.uua.org/files/
uuthevote_team_building_toolkit_1.pdf](https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/uuthevote_team_building_toolkit_1.pdf)

SOCIAL JUSTICE

UUCA can be proud of the support they have given to Preventionfocus led by Cheryl Stevens. Social Justice did a plate collection on September 29th. Through the generosity of our members we were able to fund one of the 10-week programs of the Supper Club.

The Supper Club, through Preventionfocus, educates experientially how to shop, manage a budget, and prepare nutritious meals made from scratch. They learn to present and serve food as well as how to set a formal table. The girls learn to work together and develop conflict resolution skills.

Part of the program includes introspection through journaling. Not only do they reflect on the food preparation; they also use this as an avenue to reflect on their relationships at home, school and the program.

At the last dinner, the girls were allowed to invite a woman who was a powerful role model in their lives. The Lackawanna Middle School Principal and her daughter as well as the school counselor were in attendance and they have been with the program every step of the way. They expressed their enthusiasm for the program and their gratitude for our church in creating this opportunity for the girls.

Before dining, each girl and the guests were asked to say one thing they were thankful for. It was a beautiful and heartfelt sharing.

John and Karen Thompson, Margot Shoemaker, Pat Burke, Faith Pham and Christine Boczarska were invited to the final program celebration. The menu and the food was wonderful. It began with spinach artichoke dip cups, followed by a salad with a delicious vinaigrette dressing. Baked chicken, mashed potatoes and roasted asparagus rounded out the meal. Dessert was red velvet cheesecake brownies.

After dinner, the girls were given awards for their participation in the program. They also received a recipe book to celebrate their completion of the program. They were very grateful for the opportunity and sad to see it end. The principal was so inspired that she is seeking other financial avenues to create more of these opportunities in her school for both the girls and the boys.

On behalf of the UUCA Social Justice Team, thank you for your generosity in supporting this amazing program.

Respectfully,

W. John Thompson

Rev. Michelle Presents Poems by Cathy Smith Bowers January 12

Although it was at my suggestion that this group form to share poetry and insights, I have not been able to participate; so many priorities! But I recently met Cathy Smith Bowers in my certification program in Spiritual Direction, and her poetry left me "God-smacked." Cathy has been the North Carolina Poet Laureate (2010-2012) and her poetry is incredibly earthy and spiritual all at the same time. I simply must share the poetry of this amazing, funny, deep woman. I hope y'all will join with me on Sunday, January 12 after worship as the poetry group convenes in the Reeb Room (second floor, office wing). Here's just one phrase to tantalize you from the poem, *False Spring*:



On a day too beautiful to be dutiful, I'm tempted to call in sick.

You'll just have to come to the January session to find out what happens next!

—Rev. Michelle



26 November 2019

2019 Human Rights Day Message

10 December is Human Rights Day; that is because the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948 in Paris, France. U.N. Headquarters in New York City was not finished until 1952. The Commission on Human Rights began its work in January 1947 under the chairpersonship of Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962). In thirty Articles, the Declaration sets forth basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, to which all human beings are entitled to everywhere in the world without any discrimination. 2019 is the seventy-first anniversary of the Universal Declaration's adoption.

INTERNATIONAL
Human
RIGHTS DAY



The United Nations' General Assembly had proclaimed the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations." No U.N. Member State has a perfect human rights record, but all 193 U.N. Member States should aspire to realize the Universal Declaration's thirty Articles.

The U.N. has also adopted two Covenants to formally implement the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. No U.N. Member State has currently formally adopted and implemented both of these Covenants. That remains to be achieved in the future, but it is imperative that the adoption and implementation of both these two Covenants by all 193 U.N. Member States occur as quickly as possible.

Both the United Nations' Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights categorically state that the realization of human rights is essential for the promotion and maintenance of world peace. Therefore, on Human Rights Day (10 December), every U.N. Member State and person should resolve to implement the Universal Declaration's thirty Articles. This will begin the process of leading our troubled, interdependent world in a much more constructive direction. In too many parts of the world, there are flagrant human rights violations and these must be eliminated if world peace is to prevail in the future.

Implementing the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights throughout our interdependent world may be a daunting task, but it is not an insurmountable one and should evoke humanity's foremost efforts. At the present moment in human history, there is nothing more important than the human family, achieving and maintaining world peace. The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its thirty Articles should, therefore, be read by all people and implemented throughout our interdependent world in order to promote world peace and human betterment. The international clock of doom is ticking. There is no time to lose if the human family is to flourish and not be rendered extinct.

David Slive, U.N. Envoy



AMHERST LITTLE FREE PANTRY UPDATE

The Amherst Little Free Pantry is busy making community connections for donations.

Kudos to the Starbucks on Main Street in Williamsville and the store manager Julie for making our Pantry the recipient of their November food drive. Many thanks to the store's customers for four boxes of donations.

We are also grateful to the Petsmart on Niagara Falls Blvd., Store Manager, Paul, and Assistant Store Manager, Lisa, for donating several kinds of dog treats—three boxes full. We have had several anonymous requests from Pantry users asking for pet food and are glad to help

We saw a greatly increased need from Thanksgiving to New Year's and our shelves need restocking of the basics: cereal, tuna, canned fruit and fruit cups, canned or boxed soup, juice/milk drink boxes, pasta (including lasagna), pasta sauce, toilet paper and deodorant. Also items for celebrating like canned hams (non-perishable), stuffing mixes, side dishes, canned yams, cake mixes and ground coffee. Please no corn and no green beans. Remember non-perishables only and no glass.

We are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with no questions asked. You don't have to wait to get help. All are welcome.

The Little Free Pantry Team meets the first Sunday of the month after services. For questions or comments please contact Maria Ceraulo at amherstlittlefreepantry@uuamherst.org.

Like us on Facebook: [amherstlittlefreepantry](https://www.facebook.com/amherstlittlefreepantry)



Welcome Visitors!

Please leave the parking spaces on the right in front of the sidewalk leading into daycare open for our first time visitors! It's just a simple way to let them know they are valued!

Thank you.

Connections and Welcome

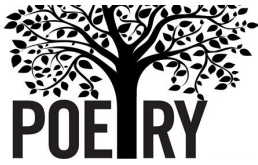
Don't forget to call your minister!

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 a visit. When in doubt, call!

Tax season is coming

The Finance Committee wants to remind you that we are approaching tax season, and the tax laws regarding charitable contributions have evolved and changed. People need to check with their tax preparer or financial adviser as to whether they will file long or short form AND if they are filing long form to know which tax year in which they need their charitable contributions to be shown. Please be aware that statements for 2019 will be printed and emailed in 2020.

UU MEMBERS GET-TOGETHER THIS MONTH



Poetry as Practice, Reeb Room

Sun, Jan. 12, 12:00 pm

Rev. Michelle presents poems by Cathy Smith Bowers, Poet Laureate of North Carolina (2010-2012). Questions? Contact Diane Bofinger, dbofinger@buffalo.edu or 716-689-8954.

Support for Loss & Change, Living Room

Thurs, Jan. 16, 3:00 pm

All are welcome as we gather to support each other through life's difficult experiences.



Caring for One Another, Dining Room

Tues, Jan. 21, 1:30 pm

Volunteer group to help members in need: sick visits, ride to church, sending cards, etc. For information, contact Ron Palmere at caring@uuamherst.org.



UUCA Book Club, Dining Room

Sun, Jan. 26, 12:00 pm

Meets monthly to discuss books we've read on selected topics.



Young Adult Meet-up,

Whitney Young Room

Sundays, Noon-1:30 pm

Come to the coffee hour in the Emerson Room for snacks and conversation. For information, or to be added to the email or text lists, contact Diane Bofinger at youngadults@uuamherst.org or 716-418-3272.

Helpful Reminders

Be A Coffee Hero!

Sign up to help with coffee hour after services. Put your name on the sheet by the coffee pot on Sundays or contact Margot Shoemaker.

Sense-itivity Helps

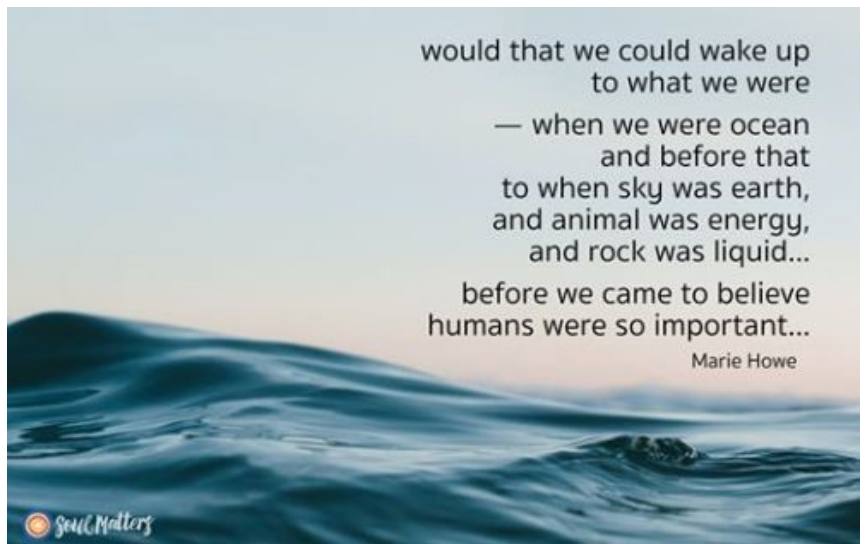
We have many friends who have chemical sensitivities, whether due to asthma or allergies. We can be more welcoming and inclusive by refraining from wearing scents at church.



Just a reminder to save your Dash's receipts and put them in the collection box in the Donation Center in lobby. Proceeds from collecting these go to the Global African Village. More at globalafricanvillage.org.

would that we could wake up
to what we were
— when we were ocean
and before that
to when sky was earth,
and animal was energy,
and rock was liquid...
before we came to believe
humans were so important...

Marie Howe



UUCA JANUARY CALENDAR

Blue Mountain Meditation, every Tues. 7:00 pm (Reeb).
Planet Thursday, becomes Planet Tuesday starting
January 7th from 6:00-7:30 pm. Details on room location
to come.

Thu Jan 2
12:00 pm ROMEO'S Lunch, Buffalo Brew Pub

Fri, Jan 3
7:00 pm Cocktails & Conversation, Murphy Brown's
Craft Beer Emporium, 9500 Main St., Clarence

Sat, Jan 4
10:00 am Crafts with the Minister Meet-up (LR)

Sun, Jan 5
9:15 am Connections Café
10:30 am Church Service
12:00 pm Young Adult Meet-up (WYR)
12:00 pm Little Free Pantry (LR)

Mon, Jan 6 Office Closed

Tues, Jan 7 Women's Afternoon Study Group (LR)

Wed, Jan 8
7:00 pm Ministry Council (Fahs)

Sun, Jan 12
9:15 am Connections Café
10:30 am Church Service
12:00 pm Young Adult Meet-up (WYR)
12:00 pm Poetry as Practice (Reeb)

Mon, Jan 13 Office Closed

Tue, Jan 14
12:30 pm Current Events Lunch (Em)
7:00 pm Bord of Trustees Meeting (Fahs)

Wed, Jan 15
1:30 pm Social Justice Meeting (LR or Em)
7:00 pm Preaching by Parishioners (Fahs)

Thu, Dec 16
3:00 pm Support for Loss & Change (LR)

Sun, Jan 19
9:15 am Connections Café
10:30 am Church Service
12:00 pm Young Adult Meet-up (WYR)
12:00 pm Marketing Task Group (LR)

Mon, Jan 20 Office Closed

Tue, Jan 21
12:30 pm Women's Lunch (Em)
1:30 pm Caring for One Another (Em)
5:00 pm Finance Meeting (Em)
5:30 pm Endowment Trust Meeting (Fahs)

Sat, Jan 25
9:00 am Finance Committee Meeting (Em)

Sun, Jan 26
10:30 am Church Service
11:45 am Winter Celebration (Em/Kit/LR)
12:00 pm Young Adult Meet-up (WYR)
12:00 pm UUCA Book Club (DR)

Mon, Jan 27 Office Closed

Tue, Jan 28
1:30 pm Women's Afternoon Study Group (LR)

MORE PROGRAMS ONLINE

UUCA hosts a number of community groups each month as well as private services for a variety of occasions. See the complete calendar online at uuamherst.org/calendar.

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 What's Up Wednesday: Tuesdays by 11:00 am

Office Hours:
Tuesday through Friday—9am to 2pm



Join Us for a Winter Celebration!

January 26, 11:45 am

Outdoor and indoor family fun with a
“modified potluck.” See page 6 for details.



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634-3010