

May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society

We embrace all spiritual journeys and encourage service as we build a more loving and just world



May 2025
Volume 88
Issue 5

Review Time!



It's FINALLY spring! Which means, it's also the time of year when we take a moment to check in about how we're doing as a community and how my ministry is serving our congregation.

A few years ago the board's comprehensive evaluation of my ministry and all our shared ministries at MMUUS, and, while amazing, it took A LOT of volunteer hours! As a result, the board decided to do those deep dives every 5 years, with lighter annual check-ins in between.

This year, our wonderful Committee on Ministry (COM) – [LeeAnn McKinney, Eric Petit McClure, Richard Pearson, and Kevin King] – is handling this review. They're looking not just at my work but at the whole picture of our congregational health. Because let's face it – I can't do this work alone! The magic of MMUUS happens when we all bring our hearts and hands together.

The COM would love to hear your thoughts about my ministry and our shared ministry. Please remember that we don't accept anonymous feedback – your name will be attached, and both the COM and I will see what you share. They're collecting thoughts until May 6th, so reach out to any COM member before then if you have something to share.


And as a reminder, you don't need to wait for a formal review to talk with me. My door is always open for conversation, whether you're bursting with joy about something happening in our community or have concerns you'd like to discuss. I'm here year-round for those conversations – not just during this review season!

Also, keep an eye out for the flip chart at church where you can jot down what you think are our congregation's notable accomplishments and successes this fiscal year. It's so energizing to celebrate our journey together!

I love you all so much, and I look forward to starting Year Eight together this summer!

Rev. Jo



		
5/4	Land Stewardship Cleanup (See Article Below)	Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford
5/11	Witnessing the Right of Reproductive Choice	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Ruth Yanai
5/18	No Going Back Moment	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken
5/25	TBD	Worship Associate Karen Sgarlata

<https://zoom.us/j/91328201757?pwd=gKDU2sIVTRxcLUP44zwpOXPZq9rb8L.1>

Meeting ID: 913 2820 1757

Passcode: 098900

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,91328201757# US (New York)

+16469313860,,91328201757# US

Dial by your location

• +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

• +1 646 931 3860 US



May 4th Land Stewardship

Join us on Sunday May 4th for our annual intergenerational land stewardship gathering where we spend time outside taking care of our land. We will begin in the sanctuary for a brief worship and then head outside.

All ages welcome!

Wear work clothes and boots/shoes that can get wet or muddy, bring work gloves as well as tarps, rakes, wheelbarrows, chainsaw, clippers for small branches. A huge thank you goes out to Fred and Charlie for cutting the grasses which we will take away at this event! A light lunch will be provided for those who are giving their time to work on our land. Many hands make light work, so please join us to beautify our grounds after this rough winter.

Custodian Search

We are searching for a part time custodian!

Flexible schedule

\$15.50/hour

15 hours a week September - June

10 hours a week July - August



Contact the MMUUS Office if interested



An after-worship lunch featuring barbecue and make-your-own sundaes will be held on May 18th immediately following the service. Come and join us for freshly grilled hamburgers and hot dogs (including veggie options) and a variety of your favorite salads and sides. This event is sponsored by the Board of Trustees, the Diversity Action Team and the OWL group. Suggested donation is: Adults \$0-\$10, Children \$0-\$6, Families \$0-\$20.

From the Church Office



CONTACT US

Minister

Director of Religious Education

Director of Music

Board President

Book Keeper

Finance

Church Office

Rev. Jo VonRue

Stacy Sceiford

Glenn Kime

Peter McClure

Leslie Dendy

Jennifer Newman

Teri Coon

ministerjrev@gmail.com

stacymaydre@gmail.com

gkimeorganist@gmail.com

peterrogermcclure@gmail.com

lesliedendy@yahoo.com

mamaslash@twcny.rr.com

office@mmuus.org

HISTORY CORNER



Syracuse's First Decoration Day



The national observance of Decoration Day, now known as Memorial Day, began in 1868. The Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic (the Union Army's veterans' association) decreed that May 30 be set aside to honor the hundreds of thousands of men who lost their lives in the country's Civil War by placing flowers and ribbons on their graves.

Syracuse's first Decoration Day observance was held a year later. It was organized by a distinguished group of local Union veterans. They called for the citizens of Syracuse to gather at Hanover Square and march in a procession to five of the city's cemeteries. (Syracuse cemeteries hold the remains of thousands of Union soldiers.)

The military leaders, acting as marshals, were followed by a contingent of police, the Syracuse City Band, and carriages carrying disabled veterans. Hundreds of additional veterans marched behind them, followed by the flower wagon, and finally, civilian marchers.

The procession first stopped at St. Joseph's cemetery (no longer in existence), where flowers were placed on 12 graves. Next, they stopped at Rose Hill Cemetery to decorate 30 graves, the Jewish cemetery for one grave, and St. Mary's for 19 graves. The procession ended at Oakwood Cemetery, where 55 graves were decorated.

Reverend Samuel Joseph May (the second minister of the Unitarian Society of Syracuse, and our namesake) addressed the crowd of nearly 8000 assembled there. In a 2024 *Post-Standard* article, Robert Searing of the Onondaga Historical Association pointed out the "sweet poetic justice" of the moment, given that Rev. May had been burned in effigy in Hanover Square a few years earlier for his unwavering support of abolition and equal rights.* Here is part of what Rev. May said:

"We pray thy Holy Spirit to impress this deeply on the ears of us all...standing over the graves of some of *the many thousands in our land who were brought to their untimely death by the single iniquity of our nation.*" [Rev. May considered slavery to be the "original sin" of the country.] He implored, "Let not the cause of our late awful civil war ever be forgotten. May it be told to our children and our children's children to the latest generation, so that, *however extended and powerful our Republic may hereafter become, she may never again trample upon the rights of human beings.*" He ended with a call to action, "Let us not content ourselves with decorating their graves...*may we all adorn our own characters with those ... virtues which alone can give stability to our nation.*"

As we approach Memorial Day in these chaotic times, may we be inspired by the words and actions of Rev. May.
Mary Louise Edwards

MMUUS History Committee, history@mmuus.org

* Searing's 5/31/2024 article was the source for this newsletter contribution.

UU Gathering of Men

"The Gathering of Men is an annual get-together of Unitarian-Universalist men of all ages, colors, creeds, sexual orientations, gender identity and expression. We gather each year to share our experiences as men and explore what that means."

This annual weekend event will be held at Arnot Forest Lodge & Cabins (Camp Arnot) in Cayuta, NY (a two hour drive from Rochester) on June 6-8, 2025.

Flyer and full article, with registration information, available in the foyer

Beneath the surFACE: Art, Awareness & Action Against Head and Neck Cancer

Beneath the surFACE (BTS) is a powerful and creative health education program developed by the Upstate Cancer Center, in collaboration with students from Nottingham High School. The program combines health and art to raise awareness about head and neck cancers—and how they can be prevented.

*May
Art Show*

Head and neck cancer is one of the most physically and emotionally challenging cancers, affecting a person's ability to eat, speak, and breathe. The good news? Up to 90% of these cancers are preventable with the HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine—recommended for all children starting at age 9.

Each year, public health students from Syracuse University's Falk College present the BTS curriculum to Nottingham High School's health and art students. Then, the art students get creative: they transform radiation masks—used by real patients during treatment—into stunning works of art. These pieces tell powerful stories of strength, struggle, and survival, giving a voice to those impacted by cancer.

HPV doesn't just cause head and neck cancers. It's also linked to cervical, vaginal, vulvar, penile, and anal cancers. The CDC reports that 90% of HPV-related cancers could be prevented if everyone received the full vaccine series.

The students' work will be on display in the Social Hall during the month of May. Want to learn more or get involved? Contact:

- Theresa DeRosa, Health Teacher, Nottingham High School
- Christina Ferlenda, Art Teacher, Nottingham High School
- Martha Ryan, RN, MPS, BTS Coordinator, Upstate Cancer Center ryanmart@upstate.edu, 315-415-0682

Rev. Jo end of year schedule

Dear ones, I'll be taking my summer vacation and study leave away from the congregation soon. While I'll remain available for emergencies, I'll otherwise be disconnecting for some rejuvenation time.

My last day physically in Syracuse will be Tuesday, June 10th. I'll still be available via Zoom until Sunday, June 15th, when I'll be representing our MMUUS community at the UUA General Assembly (during which I'll only check emails occasionally). After GA wraps up, I'll continue to be available on Zoom until June 30th.

I'll return to emails and planning for our church year on August 10th. Starting August 17th, I'll be open to scheduling Zoom meetings and other church matters. Mark your calendars - I'll be back in the pulpit for our Annual Water Ingathering on September 7th!

Throughout the summer, our amazing team of Worship Associates will lead discussion-based services in the social hall every other Sunday. On our off Sundays, we'll join our friends just down the road at First UU Society of Syracuse for shared worship.

End of church year business

Congregational Budget Meeting May 18 at 12:00 In Person Only -- New Members -- and old -- Please Read

Prior to the Annual Meeting on June 8, at which the Finance Committee will present a proposed budget for approval for the July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026 fiscal year (FY 25/26), we present a **draft budget** for the congregation to consider, and to ask any questions you might have, at noon on May 18.

In addition, we will be scheduling a zoom meeting prior to May 18 to discuss the proposed budget for FY 25/26 so that those of you who cannot attend in person on May 18 can still participate in this important process.

On May 4, the current Operating Fund budget for FY 24/25 will be posted on the BOT bulletin board, and a copy can be requested from the office. We encourage you to take the time to look at the current budget prior to attending the Congregational Budget Meeting -- and feel free to ask questions beforehand if you have them. I am happy to talk to anyone and everyone about the nuts and bolts of our financial workings, and the more you understand, the smoother our budget meeting will go! Thank you, Jennifer Newman, Treasurer mamaslash@twcny.rr.com

Annual Meeting

Sunday June 8th at noon in the Sanctuary

Annual Reports

If your committee or team provides an annual report please have these to the office in Word format by May 15th.

Please contact the office for the submission format we would like the reports in.



Redd & the Paper Flowers (Folkus Member Appreciation Show) on Friday, May 2 @ 8pm.
Dom Flemons on Friday, May 16 @ 8pm.

Please visit the FOLKUS PROJECT website for details and tickets (folkus.org)



Celebration of Life for Charlie Hannah will be Sunday May 4 at 2pm



UPDATE about our shared congregation, Kingston, Ontario...The congregation will not be joining us in September at Unirondack due to the majority of the members of the Kingston UU congregation not wanting to visit the U.S. while the trade and culture war and threats to Canada's sovereignty are happening. To me, it is understandable, and so sad since we were beginning a lovely relationship with folks there.

May Memorial 2025 Unirondack weekend

The 2025 September weekend at Unirondack is scheduled for Friday, Sept 19th (4 pm) to Sunday, Sept 21st mid-afternoon. Unirondack, a UU Camp & Conference Center, is in the western Adirondacks, near Lowville, NY. To see the

Unirondack facilities/environment, the website is: www.unirondack.org

Since 2008, we have hosted this intergenerational Unirondack weekend as a source of early fall community building for our UU congregations. The weekend is often an introduction to the camp for youth and families who later go on to be campers and staff at the weeklong youth or family camps. We hope you consider coming along for the weekend! Cost for the 2024 entire weekend (food, lodging, activities) was \$100-\$110/pp depending on age; this year's costs are not known yet, but we expect it will be about the same price. Financial assistance for MM families is often available; please contact Stephanie Cross (mscross1234@gmail.com) about financial aid for the weekend

From member Judy Jerome:

I will be attending the Women's Weekend at Unirondack this year, May 16-18. The weekend is open to all women and those who identify as women. I have attended every year (10 years now) and wouldn't miss it for the world. Does anyone want to carpool or go with me? Please contact me at judy_jerome@hotmail.com. <https://www.unirondack.org/womens-weekend-1>

Also, if you love Unirondack and would welcome a wonderful family experience there, consider attending Family Camp, August 18-23. This will be the fourth year that Lola, Nora, Rachel and I will be attending. We cherish every minute of it. <https://www.unirondack.org/family-camp>. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Please submit photos for the May Memorial Picture Directory

Yes, we are reviving the photo feature of our member directory! Photos are an immense help to newer members to integrate with our community and a great way for all members to get to know more people. Participation is optional, but we strongly encourage everyone to submit photos for this project. The Board of Trustees fully supports this initiative. Here are a few things you need to know:

- If possible, please share photos digitally with Teri Coon. If you don't have access to digital pictures, we can scan your printed picture, but it's best to keep those to a minimum.
- We think we can accept photos of any size, shape and resolution. However, we may not know these limitations until we have integrated a number of pictures. Please bear with us if we need to ask for second submittals from some people.
- We can accept individual photos or pictures of couples or families. In the latter case, please let us know if you wish to use a picture for more than one person's directory entry (e.g., a separately listed partner).
- Photos can be informal and may include pets, if desired, but please limit submissions to photos of yourself (or yourselves).

Note that this directory is intended only for May Memorial members and friends. We will continue our current policy of keeping it off the public and Members Only websites and only making it available upon a participant's request to the Office Administrator (Teri).

UPCOMING Events

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Thursday	May 1	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
Sunday	May 4	Celebration of Life for Charlie Hannah	2pm	Sanctuary
Tuesday	May 6	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	May 8	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Spiritual Enrichment Group	6pm	Teenz
Sunday	May 11	Soul Matters Sharing Circle	12:15pm	Teenz
Monday	May 12	Date With Death Club	1pm	Social Hall
		Twisted Sisters	7pm	Teenz
Tuesday	May 13	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	May 15	Bookenders	1:30pm	Memorial Room
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
Sunday	May 18	Budget Hearing	Noon	Sanctuary
Tuesday	May 20	Writers Group	10am	Teenz
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	May 22	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Spiritual Enrichment Group	6pm	Teenz
Tuesday	May 27	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	May 29	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room

Interfaith Pride Worship Service

Tuesday June 10th 7pm

Join us here at May Memorial as we have the honor of hosting this year's CNY Pride Interfaith Worship service. Please come and help folks feel welcome! If you are interested in helping us set up or clean up from the reception, please reach out to Rev. Jo.

May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society

3800 East Genesee Street
Syracuse, NY 13214
315.446.8920
office@mmuus.org



Office Hours:

Mon - Thurs: 9am-2pm (other times by appointment only)

Days off are Friday and Saturday

Contact us:

office@mmuus.org

315-446-8920