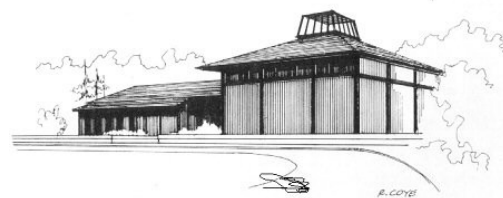


May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society

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



June 2025
Volume 88
Issue 6



Oh my loves...

As I write this final newsletter before summer, I keep thinking about Irish poet and Theologian, Pádraig Ó Tuama's reminder that "the story isn't finished."

This year has been hard. We've watched political systems fail people who need them most. We've seen policies that harm our most vulnerable neighbors. Some days it feels overwhelming, and that's okay. Your frustration and grief are valid responses to real injustice.

Here's what I see when I look at our May Memorial community: people who show up. You volunteer at Gethsemane and other food pantries every week. You organize and attend rallies for justice. You check on elderly neighbors. You donate to mutual aid funds. You practice the kind of radical hospitality that actually changes lives.

This isn't small stuff. This is how democracy works from the ground up. This is resistance.

So, this summer remember to continue the work of resistance and remember to rest and care for yourselves. Read novels that transport you. Have long dinners with friends. Sleep in on the weekends. Swim in lakes. Go to concerts. Rest isn't selfish, it's how we sustain ourselves for the long work ahead.

Our story does not end when we rest; our stories continue through each of our actions and the words we speak when we hear about injustice. Let us create stories of hope together; the meaning we create through our actions, the justice we pursue through our choices, the love we practice in our daily lives. This is how hope survives!

Your voice matters. Your presence makes a difference. Our story is still being written, and you are an essential part of it.


Narrative Theology #1

And I said to him:
Are there answers to all of this?
And he said:
The answer is in a story
and the story is being told.
And I said:
But there is so much pain.
And she answered, plainly:
Pain will happen.
Then I said:
Will I ever find meaning?
And they said:
You will find meaning
where you give meaning.
The answer is in a story
and the story isn't finished.
- **Padraig O Tuama**



As a reminder, I will be away for the summer from June 30th to August 17th. If you have a pastoral emergency that arises, please contact Teri in the office and she will let me know to be in touch with you. Never forget, my summer showers, that each of you are loved beyond belief.

Rev. Jo

		
6/1	Beloved and Bold: Reclaiming Our Pride In Challenging Times	Rev. Jo VonRue and Worship Associate Eliza Bailey
6/8	Flower Communion	Rev. Jo VonRue and Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford

<https://zoom.us/j/91328201757?pwd=gKDU2sIVTRxcLUP44zwpOXpZq9rb8L.1>

Meeting ID: 913 2820 1757

Passcode: 098900

One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

• +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

• +1 646 931 3860 US

*2024
2025
Zoom Link*

6/15	Hymn Sing	Worship Associate Kent Lindstrom and Fred Fiske
6/22	General Assembly	Watch Party at First UU 109 Waring Rd at 11 am
6/29	TBA	Worship Associate Karen Sgarlata

<https://zoom.us/j/93390420438?pwd=aLkJrtUResmyLOwBdvL8rqFSFTKiSq.1>

Meeting ID: 933 9042 0438

Passcode: 128170

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*Summer
2025
Zoom Link*



JUNE

Once again we will be sharing Summer Services with First UU

First UU is at:
109 Waring Road

Service will be at 10:30am in person and on Zoom

June 15th	Hymn Sing with Fred Fiske and Worship Associate Kent Lindstrom	May Memorial
June 22nd	General Assembly Watch Party	First UU 11am
June 29th	Worship Associate Karen Sgarlata	May Memorial

July

Once again we will be sharing Summer Services with First UU

First UU is at:
109 Waring Road

Service will be at 10:30am in person and on Zoom

July 6th		First UU
July 13th	Guest Speaker Jennie Prouty from Interfaith Works/Worship Associate David Mendelsohn	May Memorial
July 20th		First UU
July 27th	Worship Associates Hillary Dornton/Karen Sgarlata	May Memorial

AUGUST

Once again we will be sharing Summer Services with First UU

First UU is at:
109 Waring Road

Service will be at 10:30am in person and on Zoom

August 3		First UU
August 10th	Worship Associate Noah Lapidus	May Memorial
August 17th		First UU
August 24th	Worship Associate Eliza Bailey	May Memorial
August 31st	Poetry Service	First UU

Sabbatical Musings: Fascists Hate Joy



During my first worship service returning from sabbatical Acting DRE Lia Parks asked me in children's time, "What was the hardest thing about being on sabbatical?" I responded that the hardest thing for me was being away from the May community during the election and inauguration. I knew that the children and families at May were going to have a lot of big feelings, and I felt like I should be there to support them. I also had my own big feelings to grapple with, and I had to figure out how to move forward with my personal goals for sabbatical (rest and spiritual renewal) while coming to terms with the harm that I knew folks would experience and the knowledge that I would need to show up for the communities and people affected when called upon. I concluded that the best thing I could do for others was to care for myself. I knew that there would be ample opportunities for me to show up and when I did, I wanted to be able to bring my best self. The best way for me to do that was to moderate my news intake to protect my peace and intentionally focus on the things that bring me joy.

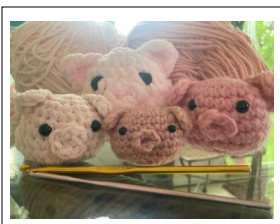
It felt selfish at first focusing my energy on protecting my peace and seeking joy while so many others were experiencing fear and pain. And I was pestered by the thought, how can anyone be happy at a time like this!? But like how I absorbed Tricia Hersey's message that rest can be resistance; I required a paradigm shift around joy. That paradigm shift came in the form of the phrase, "fascists hate joy". I'm not sure exactly where I first stumbled across the phrase, but I've seen and heard it several times since and it has become something of a mantra for me. I learned that experiencing joy doesn't mean that I'm ignorant of or indifferent to the struggles of those around me, rather it is in defiance of those in power who seek to control us. Despite their best efforts to grind me down, I refuse to give them the power over who I am at my core and how I experience peace, love, and joy.

So how did I cultivate joy on sabbatical? My most reliable joy-producer is music. I love singing and dancing and bopping along to the beat. Even if it's a boring task like doing the dishes—if I have my headphones, it becomes a dance party or sing along...or both! And my truly happy place is creating music in community with others. I'm so grateful to be a part of the Syracuse Gay and Lesbian Chorus so that I can sing in harmony with my friends and put something beautiful out into the world. In addition to keeping music front and center in my pursuit of joy, I also decided to learn a new creative skill, I learned to crochet tiny stuffed animals (amigurumi). Specifically, I found an online pattern to make a plushie piggy.

The pig pattern brought me joy because of its cuteness, and because it reminded me of "Jetpig", the mnemonic we use in RE to remember the UU shared values of justice, equity, transformation, pluralism, interdependence, and generosity. My first pig took several hours, and I struggled with getting the crochet hook caught on the yarn. After a few practice pigs I started to get the hang of things and crochet turned into a relaxing activity to do with my hands while watching tv. I now have several piggies! I get better at crocheting the more piggies I make, and I plan to give them out to the RE kids once I have enough of them.

And finally, the way that I cultivated joy was to simply be open to finding it in my every day. In the article "Glimmer: How to Trigger Feelings of Joy and Safety" by Theodora Blanchfield, AMFT, I discovered the concept of a glimmer: "A glimmer is the exact opposite of a trigger—it is some kind of cue, either internal or external that brings one back to a sense of joy or safety." Perhaps you hear a baby laughing and joy bubbles up in you, or you walk past a window where the smell of baking cookies wafts out and it sparks a joyful memory, or you feel a cool breeze on your face after working in the garden and feel joyful satisfaction...the possibilities are endless.

So, I invite you to be open to cultivating more joy in your life, and to look for your glimmers! The more you notice them and sit with joy in the moment, the more sensitive you will get to finding glimmers. And remember, not only will you get to experience the joy, but you will also be resisting fascism in the process because fascists hate joy.



In Peace,

Stacy Sceiford, Director of Religious Education

HISTORY CORNER



Our Memorial Garden

May Memorial's "Memorial Garden" includes all the green space to the west of our building, bordered by E. Genesee Street, DeWitt Road, and Meadow Brook. When the property was purchased in the late 1950s, that area was overgrown with weeds and vines and strewn with excavation and construction debris, and it remained that way for many years.

The Memorial Garden, as we now know it, was the vision of Gerry Lanier, a May Memorial member and forestry professor at SUNY-ESF. He saw it as an "outdoor extension" of church activities and a place for "both celebrations and remembrances." Gerry died in 1990, but his bequest helped create the Memorial Garden.

Soon after Gerry's death, volunteers started cleaning the space and clearing away the brush. A seven-member committee was appointed to take responsibility for developing the area into a Memorial Garden and managing it. A professional landscape plan was developed, underground drainage pipes were installed, and perennials were planted.

Many dreams for the Memorial Garden have been realized since 1990. There are benches, paths, and places for meditation, as well as space at the far end of the property for the placement of cremated remains. Two large meditation stones can be found nearby. A paved pathway connects the sidewalk and driveway above to the garden below.

In 1992, a stone patio was installed outside the lower-level doors of the building, and a multi-purpose pavilion was completed in 2004. Funds for the pavilion were given in memory of long-time member Ernie Archambault. In 2006 a large marble tablet honoring Rev. Samuel Joseph May was installed on the outside wall of the church facing the garden. (The 1885 tablet, previously in the James Street church, had been missing since May Memorial's move to East Genesee Street in 1964.) Through the years the Memorial Garden has been used for church picnics, outdoor services and celebrations, including weddings, and by RE classes, as well as vendors for "Arts on Genesee," a fine arts and crafts sale held at MMUUS for a few summers.

In October of 2019, our Memorial Garden was in the news when an RE group found the burned remains of our Pride flag there. An earlier version of this article was written for the November 2019 newsletter, as we were processing that act of vandalism and violation of our space.

If you haven't visited the Memorial Garden, we hope you will do so soon. It is a very special place, our own small "nature preserve" that we maintain.

Mary Louise Edwards & Kent Lindstrom

MMUUS History Committee history@mmuus.org



June
Art Show

This month we welcome two artists: **Sue Murphy and Sheila M. Byrnes**. Both are members of the Central New York branch of the **National League of American Pen Women**, and Byrnes is currently the president of the **National League of American Pen Women**. The League was founded in Washington, D.C. in 1897, where the organization is headquartered. NLAPW has branches throughout the nation to offer support and networking to women artists, writers, choreographers, and composers. The Central New York branch will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2026.



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.

Syracuse Pride Flag raising

Saturday, May 31, 2025

11:00 AM 12:00 PM

Syracuse City Hall

233 East Washington Street

Syracuse, NY, 13202

Syracuse Gay and Lesbian Chorus Concert:

The Show Must Go On!

June 13th at 7pm

June 14th at 2pm

May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society

Information and tickets: <https://www.syrqlc.org/events/>

Syracuse Pride Parade and Festival

Saturday, June 21st, 2025

11:00 AM Parade at Inner Harbor

12noon Festival at Progress Park



If you'd like to help out May Memorial's presence at the Parade and Festival this year please visit this link to sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C054EAAA923A3F5C70-57062864-cnypride#/>





Save the Date!



New York State Convention of Universalists
2025 Annual Meeting

Two Centuries of Love at the Center

October 24 & 25, 2025
Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton, NY



- *Keynote address by UUA President Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt*
- *Bicentennial celebrations*
- *Workshops on stewardship, resistance, and more*
- *Tours, talks, hikes, music, and fellowship*

*Join us as we joyfully celebrate
the Bicentennials of NYSCU and
the UU Church of Canton!*



*Housing at Holiday Inn Express, Canton, NY.
Local hospitality options available www.uucantonny.org*

Registration and details coming August 2025 at nyscu.org



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

Annual Meeting

Sunday June 8th at noon in the Sanctuary

End of church year business

Admin time off

As has been the practice for a few years the Teri in the office will be taking vacation time starting June 13th returning to the office on June 23rd. Phone and email will be monitored for emergencies only. All other business will be handled when she returns.

Kitchen clean up

Anything in the refrigerator after June 8th will be thrown out unless it's labeled. We will not be keeping condiments over summer so take them or toss them.

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.

UPCOMING Events

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Sunday	1st	Soul Matters Sharing Circle	12:15pm	Teenz
Tuesday	3rd	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	5th	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
	5th	Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
Sunday	8th	Flower Communion Service	10:30am	Sanctuary
	8th	Annual Meeting	Noon	Sanctuary
Monday	9th	Twisted Sisters	7pm	Teenz
Tuesday	10th	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
	10th	Pride Worship Service	7pm	Sanctuary
Thursday	12th	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
	12th	Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
	12th	Spiritual Enrichment Group	6pm	Teenz
Tuesday	17th	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	18th	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
	18th	Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
Tuesday	24th	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	26th	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
	26th	Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
	26th	Spiritual Enrichment Group	6pm	Teenz

Beyond the Beckoning - A Dungeons and Dragons-style storytelling game

(Bi-weekly starting May 25th, Sundays 12pm - 4pm)

Join us in the medieval fantasy world of Ryhalune after a celestial event known as "The Beckoning" unexpectedly took most of the population away. Humanity is but a shadow of what it once was and must survive in a world where it is no longer dominant. Create a character of your choosing and embark on episodic adventures wielding sword and sorcery to achieve your chosen goals. Remember: the story goes wherever you, the players, take it.

Please sign up in person after Sunday service or by email (btb@thousandstorms.com) for planning purposes to ensure your spot. No experience needed, all adults welcome (age 16+ with parental permission). Please bring a notepad, pencil and (polyhedral) dice if you have them. If not, these will be provided. We use the free 'Open Legend' rules (<https://openlegendrpg.com/>) and will happily teach them as we play.

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