

May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society Newsletter



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



October's Theme: Courage

October | 2026
Issue 9
Vol. 89



October is probably my favorite month. It's not so much the change in temperature, rather the fall foliage. I watch the peak foliage maps closely, and the last few years I've taken short road trips with Isaac or my friends, or just blocked off a few days on my calendar to drive somewhere beautiful. This year, during peak season, I'm heading to Letchworth State Park for the first time.

It's also the case that October 2025 was the beginning of the end for my fifteen year friendship with my ride or die best friend, Lauren. We were supposed to take a fall foliage road trip together over the holiday weekend, and she canceled last minute. When I texted her about how hurt and disappointed I was, she couldn't be accountable for her actions and how she made me feel. She never responded. Months went by, when I finally checked in with her in March of this year, our friendship officially ended. It's particularly complex because Lauren and her husband bought a house in April of 2025, in the same neighborhood where my husband lives in Pennsylvania. I can walk to her house in a few minutes, and I can see it from my driveway. So every time I'm home in PA, I'm reminded of a relationship that's broken. I poured myself into that friendship in more ways than I can list here, and I'm still pretty broken up about losing it. October is complicated for me. It's the one month I really get to watch the leaves turn, and it's also the anniversary of the death of a relationship that mattered enormously to me.

I am okay. I am also sad. Both are true. I'm including one of my favorite photos of us from USA Powerlifting Bench Press Nationals in 2025 as a reminder of all the joy we shared together. This October, when we hang our leaves on the memory tree, I will hang one for Lauren. It marks the end of our friendship. It also marks my thanks for every trail, every gym session and every new place we saw together. One day I know I will look back on our friendship with joy, however, that won't happen this month, and that's ok.



October is my favorite month, and I refuse to let this grief take it from me. I want to treat it as a beginning. David Whyte describes courage as "the measure of our heartfelt participation with life, with another." So I am choosing the courage to build new friendships, and deepen some current ones. This month, I want to invite you into courageous deeper friendship. Ask someone to share a coffee or a walk. Bring one question from our Soul Matters Courage packet: "What was your bravest moment of not running away?" Answer it yourself too. Notice what you learn about them and about you.

Then take a quiet moment with these questions. What are you struggling with right now? Which relationships in your life are ending, need to end or need to change? What change would you make for good if you trusted your courage?

And as always, please check in with me if there is anything I can do to support you.

I love you, and there is nothing you can do about it.
~Rev. Jo



2026-2027 Church Year

 Worship Calendar		
10/4	A Legacy of Courageous Interference	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Eliza Bailey Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford Director of Music Glenn Kime
10/11	Bravely Owning Our Past	Rev. Jo VonRue Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford Director of Music Glenn Kime
10/18	TBD	Worship Associates Karen Sgarlata and Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford Director of Music Glenn Kime
10/25	Dolly's Gospel of Courage	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Ruth Yanai Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford Director of Music Glenn Kime

26-27
Zoom Link

[https://zoom.us/j/95408499681?
pwd=oBGaW80fqfIWDTkQV2FE4q2QNvP8ie.1](https://zoom.us/j/95408499681?pwd=oBGaW80fqfIWDTkQV2FE4q2QNvP8ie.1)
Meeting ID: 954 0849 9681
Passcode: 494343
One tap mobile
+19292056099,,95408499681# US (New York)
+16469313860,,95408499681# US



A Celebration of **Gary Carter's** life will take place on Saturday, October 10 at 11 AM. A reception will follow. All are welcome.



HISTORY CORNER

**Rev. Samuel May's Controversial Berry Street Lecture**

Reverend Samuel Joseph May, the second minister of the Unitarian congregation of Syracuse and our namesake, was involved in every major social reform movement of the mid-1800s. We have written about his work to abolish slavery and to promote racial and gender equality, as well as his pacifism and work as an educational reformer. This month we present Rev. May's more radical ideas for far-reaching social and economic reform. They were put forward in a Berry Street Lecture, delivered to fellow ministers in Boston in 1855.*

In his lecture, Rev. May called for the "proportional representation" of poor people in the legislatures of the states and the nation and urged ministers to take the lead in working to change "public sentiment" about money, as they did in the case of slavery. May believed it was up to ministers to make sure that people were "fully enlightened on the nature of money, its legitimate uses, and the evils of its accumulation in the hands of individuals or corporations." Enlightened people would then enact laws that would make it easier for every man and woman with "a fair share of industry and economy" to secure the necessities of life and harder for anyone to acquire millions of dollars.

May argued that laws regarding trade, commerce, credit, debt, wages, taxation, etc. were "much more favorable to the rich than to the poor" and should be changed. For example, bankruptcy laws work well for those who are wealthy but are of no help to the poor, who may be sent to jail because they have no legal way out of their financial obligations. New laws would also tax those who have the most wealth and can best afford to pay.

Regarding fair pay, Rev. May contended that "a man's toil for a day should ensure him a livelihood for a day." In addition, he stated that all men have a right to live and to have a means of self-support. They should be able to "rely on their own industry and frugality," rather than depend on the charity of the others.

Rev. May believed that, although it might take time, major social and economic changes such as those he espoused would take place "when men have been brought to respect the rights of humanity more than the rights of property." He ended by saying, "The true wealth of a nation is to be found in the amount of intelligence, virtuous principle, personal independence, self-possession, and solid comfort of the people generally, not in the amount of money gathered into the public treasury, or hoarded in the coffers of corporations, or of individuals."

Given the conservative nature of the Berry Street Ministerial Conference at that time, it is not surprising that Rev. May's lecture was not well received. His ideas were so controversial that his essay was not published until three years after it was delivered.

We wonder what Rev. May would say at this time when our country has hundreds of billionaires and its first trillionaire, but many people struggle every day to "make ends meet."

Mary Louise Edwards & Kent Lindstrom
MMUUS History Committee history@mmuus.org.

* The Berry Street Lecture/Essay was established in 1820 to foster "professional reflection" and "spiritual depth" in Unitarian ministers. It is run by the influential Berry Street Ministerial Conference. Rev. May's lecture can be found online through the UUMA.



Joe Crookston on Friday, October 2 @ 7:30pm
 Jake Blount on Friday, October 16 @ 7:30pm
 Stillhouse Junkies on Friday, October 30 @ 7:30pm
 Please visit the FOLKUS PROJECT website for details and tickets (folkus.org)

Spotlight: Art Gallery

Sanlly Viera is our October artist. In his own words, he describes his work and his career -



I grew up in an artistic environment, where drawing and painting became my greatest passion from an early age. I was also inspired by watching my uncles paint. At the age of 15, I began my formal art education, and after four years of study, I was accepted into the National Academy of Fine Arts San Alejandro in Havana, Cuba. There, I trained in drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture, specializing in painting and drawing.

After graduating, I began my professional career, which now spans more than 22 years. My work is inspired by everyday life, finding beauty in ordinary objects and daily scenes that I transform into artworks on a variety of surfaces, from paper and cardboard to canvas. I work across a wide range of materials, including charcoal, soft and oil pastels, oil paint, acrylics, and watercolor, with acrylic and watercolor being my favorite mediums. Watercolor, in particular, is a medium to which I am deeply committed, as I continue to refine my technique and expand my artistic language.

Throughout my career, I have participated in more than 20 solo and group exhibitions in Cuba, my country of birth, as well as in Mexico, the United States, and Canada. My work is also included in private collections in several cities across Europe and the Americas. Art is present in every moment of my day; I constantly make studies and sketches, whether during breaks at work or while traveling. From the very beginning, art has been at the center of my life



Monthly May Men's Lunch
Monthly May Men's Lunch on the **First Thursday**
 of the month at
 noon at Munjed's restaurant on Westcott Street.

Jeffrey M. Davis - third great grandson of Rev. Samuel May

Sunday October 4th at noon in the Sanctuary

What would you do if the law demanded you betray your neighbor?

In the 1850s, ordinary citizens faced that very choice under the Fugitive Slave Act. Some complied.

Others resisted—risking fines, prison, even their lives—to protect freedom seekers.

Join Jeffrey M. Davis—Boston writer and third great-grandson of Rev. Samuel Joseph May—for a gripping multimedia journey through stories of courage and defiance.

From harrowing escapes on the Erie Canal to the dramatic "Jerry Rescue" in Syracuse, you'll meet the bold citizens who refused to bow to injustice.

The lessons of the past echo today.

Discover how communities once stood against oppression—and why their stories still matter.



SHORT BIO

Jeffrey M. Davis is a Boston-based writer and creative director, and the third great-grandson of abolitionist Rev. Samuel Joseph May — a central figure in the 1851 Jerry Rescue in Syracuse, NY. That ancestral discovery sent him deep into the history of the Underground Railroad, ultimately producing a multimedia presentation and a WGA-registered, award-winning screenplay about Jermain Wesley Loguen, "King of the Underground."

WIP - Crafting Circle

Gather your favorite WIP craft, be it knitting, embroidery, felting, or coloring books- whatever you like.

Join us for craft and chat every 4th Sunday in the Teenz Room at 12:15 PM for two hours of joyful colors and conversation. All levels of crafters are welcome; extra materials will be available.



Join us for **Saturday SoUUp and Soul** Saturday October 10 from 5-7

We'll share a simple meal together, and then we'll spend time in intentionally structured conversation, getting to know each other in ways that go deeper than our usual Sunday morning hellos. This is another way for us to be intentional about building the kind of community where we get to know each other's stories, hopes, and struggles. Where we can be ourselves and feel seen. All are welcome. Come hungry. Come curious. Come ready to connect. Please bring a slow cooker or pot of soup if you are able (but not required), or some bread or crackers, but we are going to stick with just soup for the main meal. Please also bring a place setting for yourself.



Please join us at **Twisted Sisters** - a social group open to adult women and those identifying as female.

No commitment is required.

Meetings will be held on the 2nd Monday of each month from 7 to 9PM in the Teen Room, so mark your calendars. Join us for conversation, camaraderie and support as we navigate this life together.



Thursday	10/1	May Men's Lunch	Noon	Munjeds in Westcott
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Sunday	10/4	Jeffrey Davis Presentation	Noon	Sanctuary
		Adult COA Zoom (Sign up in the office)	5:30pm	ZOOM only
Monday	10/5	Adult COA In person (Sign up in the office)	1:30pm	Teenz
Wednesday	10/7	Vespers	8pm	ZOOM only
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Saturday	10/10	Memorial Service for Gary Carter	11am	Sanctuary
		Soup and Soul	5pm	Social Hall
Sunday	10/11	Sunday Lunch	After Service	
		Soul Matters Sharing Circle	12:15pm	Teenz
Monday	10/12	Twisted Sisters	7pm	Teenz
Wednesday	10/14	Vespers	8pm	ZOOM only
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Tuesday	10/20	Writers Group	10:30am	Teenz
Wednesday	10/21	Vespers	8pm	ZOOM only
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Sunday	10/25	UUIP - Crafting Circle	12:15pm	Teenz
Wednesday	10/28	Vespers	8pm	ZOOM only
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Wednesday	10/28	Vespers	8pm	ZOOM only
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary



Reminder:
We offer Tai Chi for free
every Tuesday and Thursday
at 3pm in the Social Hall



2026-2027 Board of Trustees		
President:	Peter McClure	July 2025 to June 2027
Vice president:	Amanda Perrine	July 2024 to June 2028
Secretary:	David Mendelsohn	July 2025 to June 2027
Treasurer:	Jennifer Newman	July 2025 to June 2027
Trustees:	Morgan Downing-Schmidt	July 2025 to June 2028
	Gigi Horwood-Benton	July 2026 to June 2029
	Sarah Fleming	July 2026 to June 2029
	Matracia Powell	July 2025 to June 2028
Nominating Committee:	Eliza Bailey	
	Karen Sgarlata	
	Mardie Ninno	
	Kevin King	
	Kristina Starowitz	

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Leslie Dendy, Bookkeeper	lesliedendy@yahoo.com	Contact the office: 315-446-8920
Teri Coon, Office Administrator	office@mmuus.org	Office: 315-446-8920 Cell: 315-944-0850

New policy available to May Memorial members for review

The Board has developed a new "Destructive Behavior Policy." A draft version is now available for review by MMUUS members. If you are interested in reviewing the policy, please see Teri Coon to obtain a copy. Please provide feedback to Peter McClure, President of the Board of Trustees, no later than October 10, 2026.



May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society
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