May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society Newsletter



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

November | 2026
Issue 10
Vol. 89

Theme for November: Healing

Death is Inevitable



My loves, we are all dying, every single one of us. So why not lean into the process of living, knowing none of us gets out of here alive?
This summer I completed a 16-week course with the Consciously Dying Collective and earned my Death Doula Certificate. I signed up because I felt my skills for being with people at the end of their lives were lacking. I spent about 10 hours a week on coursework and with private clients, walking them through our North Star Guide, a tool to help people prepare for their own end of life. One of our assignments was to write a short elevator speech about what Death Doulas do. Here's mine: "I like to help folks make the end of their lives just as meaningful as the rest of their lives."

This month's Soul Matters theme is Healing. As Death Doulas, we get welcomed into a person's final journey... it's a privilege I don't take lightly. I often experience people who wait until the very end to say what needs saying. In his book, *The Four Things That Matter Most*, palliative care physician Ira Byock names them: "Please forgive me. I forgive you. Thank you. I love you." He has spent decades watching what those words do for the dying and for the people they leave behind.

I think about death a lot and often wonder why we wait. I'm sure some of it is fear... fear of rejection or looking foolish, fear of opening a wound for us or others. But when we are looking square at death, we often have an injection of courage because our pride matters just a little less.

Here's the thing, my loves... healing doesn't have to wait until our organs are failing. Our UU value of Love calls us to tend our relationships now, while we still have the time and the breath. I know it is hard to be courageous and vulnerable, but what if, WHAT IF we found the courage to try to heal a relationship that has been on the rocks and it works?! So here's my invitation, this month, pick one person and say the hard thing, the kind thing... the true thing. None of us gets to choose whether we die but we DO get to choose how we live until then.

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

Rev. Jo



Sunday November 1 at 2am

2026-2027 Church Year

November Worship Calendar

11/1	Memory Tree	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Noah Lapidus Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford Director of Music Glenn Kime
11/8	Enough Light for the Next Step	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Eliza Bailey Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford Director of Music Glenn Kime
11/15	Trans Awareness Week: The Healing is in the Welcome	Rev. Jo VonRue Director of Music Glenn Kime
11/22	You Can't Heal What You Won't Name	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Charlie Bagby Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford Director of Music Glenn Kime
11/29	TBA	Worship Associates David Mendelsohn and 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
Meeting ID: 954 0849 9681
Passcode: 494343
One tap mobile
+19292056099,,95408499681# US (New York)
+16469313860,,95408499681# US





May Memorial's Special Memory Tree Service

May Memorial's memory tree service is one of our favorites of the church year. Although it's been a tradition for most of the 40+ years that we have been part of the congregation, it has changed and evolved over time. What follows is a brief history of this special service, pieced together from materials in the archives, in this case, annual reports, newsletters and orders of service.

According to a 1981 May Memorial newsletter, the Mexican "Day of the Dead" tradition was adapted in 1980 such that congregants used small paper pumpkins to remember loved ones who had died. That service was so "gratefully received" by all ages that it was brought back the next year with further adaptations. Congregants were invited to write the names of dead loved ones on small paper pumpkins and place them on the "Halloween tree." In 1982, cut out paper leaves replaced paper pumpkins for the names of deceased loved ones, and in 1986, colored paper leaves with names inscribed were hung on the "memory tree." This was the beginning of the memory tree tradition that we still embrace today.

Early on, the special late October/early November service was referred to as All Souls Sunday, a Family Celebration, or Celebrating our Sorrows and our Joys. From the beginning, it was intergenerational, with children invited to participate. (At that point in our history, children were only in the sanctuary for the 5 or 6 special "intergen" services held each year.)

For a number of years, this family service included both remembering deceased loved ones (a time for remembering) and celebrating new life (celebration of birth). Three special songs were also part of the service. "Side by side again we stand..." was sung very early in the service. "We each have our precious memories ..." (modified from "We are dancing Sarah's circle...") came just before the leaf ritual, and "For the joy of human love..." followed the welcoming of new babies.

Newsletters from the 1980s indicate that Gerry Lanier, a forestry professor and member of May Memorial, provided the unique tree on which the memory leaves were hung. (Gerry was also in charge of our very successful Christmas Tree Sale for many years.)



Over time, our memory tree ritual became separated from the celebration of birth, with the memory tree service taking place around Halloween or All Souls Day, and the welcoming of new babies often taking place in the spring.

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

SUPPORT NY TRANS YOUTH



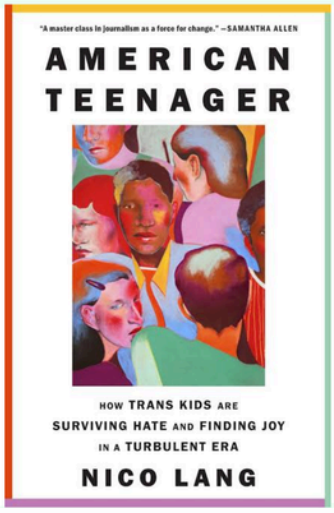
Join author Nico Lang * (**@queernewsdaily**) for a critical conversation on how to be an ally to trans kids during a turbulent era

GET THE BOOK!

Nov. 14, 10:30am
May Memorial UU Society

3800 E. Genessee St.
Syracuse, NY





CNY PRIDE
SYRACUSE, NY

Acoustic Guitar Project on Friday, November 6 @ 7:30pm
Please visit the FOLKUS PROJECT website for details and tickets (folkus.org)

Eileen Ivers & The Brigideens on Friday, November 20 @ 7:30pm
Please visit the FOLKUS PROJECT website for details and tickets (folkus.org)

Spotlight: Art Gallery

Our November artist is Suzanne Masters.



Suzanne studied design at Syracuse University. This is how she describes her work - I studied surface pattern and design and became immersed in detail. My real love of design came from cultural art (henna body art & weaving) and integrating gifts from nature (leaves, sticks, seeds & feathers often). I love to marry several elements to create one piece.

Having been a painting contractor for many years, (now Suzanne & Son's Painting) painting walls is just as much fun for me, (still is) I love the movement of paint across a surface and transforming large spaces with color! That evolved into murals inside & out, but these days I'm loving the intimacy of my studio.

I am also a healing practitioner in energy medicine with a background in Spirituality, Reiki, tapping (EFT Emotional Freedom Technique), and all areas of healing through Art and Yoga. All of which merges with the art.



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.



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.

We welcome you to celebrate with us at the Annual May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society Thanksgiving Dinner



This year's Thanksgiving dinner will be held on Thanksgiving, November 26th, from 4:30 - 7:00pm. Last year's organizers, **Kyle Brown, Josh & Leah Cronlund, Joey Favata, and Kristina Starowitz,** are returning once again to host the festivities! Sign up for the potluck style meal at the signup genius link located here [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A49A5AB2CA5F5C16-66886548-2026]. Please RSVP at the signup Genius Link (or the paper sign up available in the Social Hall) as soon as you can. Bring a dish a pass, though it is not a requirement to attend. Tell your friends and family! It's open to everyone! Inquiries regarding the event can be directed to Joey Favata - 315-491-3433



UU Book Group

The UU Book Group meets monthly on the 2nd Thursday from 2 to 4 PM in the parlor at First UU. (Nov. 12 this month) All are welcome and welcome to bring a friend. Although many book groups share a discussion of the same book, in this one each reader shares about whatever they have been reading. Looking forward to time together with folks from FIrst UU and May Memorial (and friends.)
Any questions please contact Felice at 315-436-6308
feliksakb@gmail.com

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.



Please join us for a delicious lunch after worship on November 1st, sponsored by an assorted group of individuals at May Memorial. You can enjoy some hot soups, tasty casseroles, fresh salads and yummy desserts. This is a great chance to spend time with old friends and make some new ones. It is also one of our traditional fundraisers. Suggested donation: Adults $0-$10, Children $0-$6, Families $0-$20. Don't let an empty wallet mean an empty stomach!

We still have a need for 3 more servers and a few more people for cleanup. Please contact Eliza Bailey at elizalafayette@gmail.com if you can be of assistance.



Sunday	11/1	Memory Tree Service	10:30am	Sanctuary
		Sunday lunch	After service	
Tuesday	11/3	Election Day		
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	11/4	Vespers	8pm	On Zoom Only
Thursday	11/5	Men's Lunch	noon	Munjed's on Westcott
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Sunday	11/6	Soul Matters	12:15pm	Teenz Room
Monday	11/9	Twisted Sisters	7pm	Teenz Room
Tuesday	11/10	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	11/11	Vespers	8pm	On Zoom Only
Thursday	11/12	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Saturday	11/14	Author Nico Lang (details page 4)	10:30am	Sanctuary
Tuesday	11/17	Writers Group	10am	Teenz Room
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	11/18	Vespers	8pm	On Zoom Only
Thursday	11/19	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Sunday	11/22	UUIP Crafting Circle	12:15pm	Teenz Room
Tuesday	11/24	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	11/25	Vespers	8pm	On Zoom Only
Thursday	11/26	MMUUS Thanksgiving Dinner (details page 5)		

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	

May Memorial Staff		
Rev. Jo VonRue, Minister	ministerjrev@gmail.com	570-899-0457(cell)
Stacy Sceiford, Director of RE	stacymaydre@gmail.com	Contact the office: 315-446-8920
Glenn Kime, Director of Music	gkimeorganist@gmail.com	315-729-3734
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

Be Aware of Scammers!



Rev. Jo will NEVER contact you to ask for money or gift cards.

We also do not give out sensitive church information such as passwords or directories. If you receive any requests from ANYONE forward the email to the office.



December at MMUUS

Sunday Dec 6 th

Sunday Worship Service 10:30am

Hanging of the Greens

Sunday Lunch

Sunday Dec 13 th

Music Sunday 10:30am

Sunday Dec 20 th

No Rehearsal Pageant 10:30am

Sunday Dec 21 st

Winter Solstice
(time TBA)

Wednesday Dec 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
(time TBA)



May Memorial Unitarian Universilst Society
3800 East Genesee St.
Syracuse, NY 13214