

May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society Newsletter

February 2026
Volume 89
Issue 2



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

Sunday worship service 10:30am



It's Stewardship Season!!! Your Generosity Makes Everything Possible

Since July, we've been busy! We hosted the Season of Creation celebration, bringing together people from different faith traditions to commune with nature and each other. We packed the sanctuary for Emma's Revolution in October and filled boxes with food for Gethsemane Food Pantry. In November, we partnered with Congregation Beth Shalom and Pebble Hill Presbyterian for an interfaith Thanksgiving concert that raised money for the InterReligious Food Consortium. Every Wednesday evening, people join vespers on zoom when they need quiet and community in the middle of a hard week. We officially joined CNY Solidarity, putting our congregation's resources behind organized resistance work. With your blessing and love I traveled to Minneapolis MN, a town in terror because of the ICE occupation. THIS AND SO MUCH MORE!

This is what your giving creates.

Every dollar you contribute to May Memorial does real work in the world. Your generosity, quite literally, keeps our lights on, and the energy bills paid. But perhaps more importantly, your financial contributions make it possible for the work we do together to be alive in our world for the good of all.

Your giving makes it possible for us to be a place where queer folks know they are loved and celebrated, where immigrants know they are safe... it helps maintain a place where all those who are searching for meaning can find a spiritual home without conditions, creeds, dogma or judgment.

It seems like every time I turn around we are doing something extraordinary. We are continuously growing, our welcome is off the charts, we are actively building our interfaith partnerships, showing up in our communities and neighborhoods against hate, creating multiple avenues for connection... and ultimately, together, we're building something bigger than any of us could alone.

When you give to May Memorial, you're investing in transformation. You're funding a community that has stood for justice since Samuel Joseph May helped Jerry escape slavery in 1851, and ensuring that we'll be here doing this work for the next person who walks through our doors looking for hope.

If you already give, thank you, and I hope you will also consider increasing your pledge this year. We're doing more, and we need more resources to do it well. If you're newer here and haven't started giving yet, now is your moment. Join us in funding this work, even small monthly gifts add up to real change.

We're building the world we want to see.

Your generosity makes it happen.

Please give today.



 <h1>February</h1> <h2>Worship Calendar</h2>		
2/1	What Sustains Us: The Practice of Resilient Giving	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Ruth Yanai
2/8	Multigen Sunday, witnessing and loving others	Rev. Jo VonRue Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford
2/15	Holy Laughter: Why Humor Sustains Us	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Karen Sgarlata
2/22	Rising Still: How Yesterday's Pain Becomes Tomorrow's Power	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken

<https://zoom.us/j/95274927371?pwd=H5pJFsXMxCMcFJIOWupV326HUrhlFo.1>

*2025
2026*
Zoom Link

Meeting ID: 952 7492 7371

Passcode: 210281

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,95274927371# US (New York)

+16469313860,,95274927371# US



Make it Official!

If you have been attending May Memorial for some time and are interested in joining as an official member, we would love to have you!

The next new member book signing will be held on **Sunday Feb 22nd** during worship.

Please contact Rev. Jo (ministerjrev@gmail.com) with enough time for a meeting with her before officially joining.



May Memorial

Unitarian Universalist Society

PHS 201-101 and PHS 861



May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society is a place where we build interfaith relationships that strengthen our city. Where we show up at Pride to rise with our LGBTQIA+ neighbors. Where we support Pink Haven and speak against policies that harm vulnerable people. Where we work for justice, celebrate diversity, practice radical inclusion, and show up for those who need our support most. All with Love at the Center.

It's Stewardship Season.

We need your financial generosity to be as great and as heartfelt as it can be.

The Finance team has set two possible fiscal paths forward:

At \$270,000, we can raise staff salaries closer to UUA recommendations, cover anticipated operating expenses without extra asks or fund withdrawals, and spend our energy on our mission instead of constant fundraising.

At \$300,000, we meet full UUA salary recommendations, return to Fair Share Congregation status, and have room to breathe when unexpected expenses hit.

Make your first pledge. Increase last year's giving if you can. If money is tight, contact Rev. Jo for a waiver. We need your pledge for the 2026-27 Fiscal Year because this work matters.

Your generosity funds resistance against hate, it builds sanctuary and support for those who should not journey alone. But most importantly it keeps hope alive when the world needs it most.

If you would like to pledge and did not receive your packet by Feb 8 contact Jennifer Newman mamaslash@twcny.rr.com



Undocumented Migration Project

Sunday Feb. 8th

[Hostile Terrain 94](#) (HT94) is a participatory exhibition created by the [Undocumented Migration Project](#), a non-profit organization that focuses on the social process of immigration and raises awareness through research, education, and outreach.

The exhibit is composed of over 4,000 handwritten toe tags that represent migrants who have died trying to cross the Sonoran Desert from the mid-1990s to 2024. These tags are geolocated on a large wall map of the Arizona-Mexico border, showing the exact locations where human remains were found. **The physical act of writing out the names and information for the dead invites participants to reflect, witness and stand in solidarity with those who have lost their lives in search of a better one.** This exhibit is taking place at over 120 institutions across 6 continents with the intention to raise awareness about the humanitarian crisis at America's southern border and to engage with communities around the world in conversations about migration.

The construction of HT94 is made possible by **teams of volunteers, organized by each hosting location, who participate in tag-filling workshops, where the completion of tags help to memorialize the fallen.** Staff and students from the hosting location then place the tags on the map – in the exact location where each individual's remains were found. Some tags also contain QR codes that link to content related to migrant stories and visuals connected to immigration.

Please note:

We will be having the children do a separate activity creating kindness bags for our beloveds at Gethsemane.

HISTORY CORNER



Reverend Samuel Joseph May's Antislavery Work



After recent conversations with people who are relatively new to May Memorial, we decided to revisit some of what has been written in the past about our second minister and namesake, Reverend Samuel Joseph May. Rev. May was minister of the Unitarian Congregational Society of Syracuse from 1845 to 1868.

Samuel Joseph May was born into a prominent Unitarian family in Boston in 1797. He was educated at Harvard, and in 1822 was ordained at King's Chapel in Boston. Early in his ministry, Rev. May worked as an assistant to the well-known Unitarian minister Rev. William Ellery Channing, visiting and speaking at churches in New York and other cities. Rev. May was a settled minister at churches in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Between the two placements, he worked for the Massachusetts Antislavery Society.

Rev. May had visited and preached in Syracuse in the summer of 1843 while traveling with his wife. After the death of the minister of the Unitarian Congregation, Rev. May came back as a candidate for the pulpit. By that time, he was known as an activist who was involved in every major social reform movement of his time, including women's rights, racial equality, peace, temperance, and educational reform, but especially the abolition of slavery. Having left his two previous ministries due to objections to his activism, he made sure that members of the Syracuse church understood who they would be getting if they called him to be their minister. They voted unanimously to call him, and in 1845, Rev. May moved to Syracuse to take on the ministry of the Unitarian Congregational Society.

Some key points concerning Rev. May's involvement in the struggle to end slavery are highlighted here:

- Converted to the cause of "immediate and unconditional emancipation" after meeting with William Lloyd Garrison in Boston at the age of 33.*
- Helped Garrison establish the New England Antislavery Society.
- Instrumental in founding the American Antislavery Society.
- Spoke at many antislavery meetings and often drafted resolutions.
- Criticized the U.S. policy of compromise between free and slave states as "a betrayal of common humanity for the sake of political expediency."
- Criticized the U.S. and Great Britain for failing to stand up against "the worst system of iniquity the world has ever known."
- Active in the underground railroad, helping many escaped slaves make their way to Canada.
- Participated in the famous 1851 rescue of "Jerry" McHenry, arrested under the Fugitive Slave Act. (Rev. May is one of the figures depicted in the Jerry Rescue monument in Clinton Square.)
- Worked closely with Rev. Jermain Loguen of the AME Zion Church to raise money for enslaved people who had escaped and for the legal defense of those who were recaptured.
- Served as president of the Syracuse Fugitive Aid Society.
- Burned in effigy by a proslavery mob in downtown Syracuse in 1860, along with Susan B. Anthony.
- For his tireless work to end slavery, Rev. May was inducted into the National Abolition Hall of Fame in Peterboro, NY, in October, 2018.

Mary Louise Edwards & Kent Lindstrom

MMUUS History Committee, history@mmuus.org

*S.J. May, *Recollections of our Antislavery Conflict*, 1869.





Community,
Conversations,
Connections
with Rev. Jo



Democracy in Action: Building Community Power & Resilience

The next session will be on **Tuesday February 10th 6:30-8pm** via Zoom.

Class 5: Interrupting Violence & Building Peace

Our Power to Create Safety

Political tensions are rising, and communities need people trained in de-escalation. Build understanding of how political violence works, develop assertive responses to threats, and explore community-based approaches to safety. Practice tools you can use immediately and learn how communities have successfully resisted violence throughout history. Contact May Memorial office to register: office@mmuus.org

Key Skills:

De-escalation, community defense, conflict transformation, crisis intervention



Saturday SoUp & Soul



We're starting something new, and I hope you'll join us.

Beginning on the second Saturday in **February 14th 5pm** we'll gather monthly for soup, conversation, and real connection. We'll share a simple meal together, and then we'll spend time in intentional 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 actually 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 serving for yourself.



Soul Matters
SHARING CIRCLE

The next Soul Matters Sharing Circle will be **February 8** at 12:30pm in the Teenz Room.

If you are interested in joining the group please contact the office to get on the distribution list. You'll receive a monthly reminder with the reading materials for the month.



Fresh Faces,
Coffee and
Connection
with Rev. Jo

Join us for Fresh Faces, Coffee and Connection every fourth Sunday directly after worship at 11:45am. Our next meeting is **Sunday February 22** in the Memorial Room! This monthly gathering welcomes newcomers to MMUUS with coffee, snacks, and friendly conversation. It's a perfect opportunity to learn more about our community, meet our minister and fellow congregants, and ask questions in a relaxed setting.

You are welcome exactly as you are, we're excited to get to know you better!



UUIP– Crafting Circle

Welcome all crafters, regardless of skill level and type. Crafting is better done together, so bring your favorite or forgotten WIP and join us for two hours of conversation. If you don't have a craft but are interested in learning something new, feel free to join us anyway because you never know what you might pick up.

Join us on Zoom every 2nd Friday at 7:00 pm and/or in-person on the 4th Sunday in the Teenz Room at 12:15 pm.

Zoom Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/97854397378?pwd=VaJaYKE2DzK9VeW8oR6mFrwavDjUEh.1>

If you have any questions, please contact Shana Fox at ladibluejay@gmail.com or see Teri in the office.

Beloveds,

It was a joy to share Sunday morning with you. Thank you for taking the time to hear the story of what is actually happening in Minneapolis and not the lies being spread by the administration #eyesnotlies Many of you were asking where you can donate. This is the church <https://www.sanpablostpaul.org> that I was speaking about that is doing so much incredible work for their community and who spontaneously fed 200 clergy one afternoon simply because we were there.

Please give what you can to support them and their mission.



As we enter the winter months with unpredictable weather patterns please remember:

- If you do not feel safe coming to church for service please stay home and enjoy church right in your own living room! We offer service on Zoom each Sunday.
- If we need to cancel service we will run the announcement on local channels.
- We will also send out an eblast on Sunday morning, just as we send out the reminder announcement.
- And you can always call the office. Sunday's can be super busy for the office so if we don't answer please leave a message and you'll get a call back.
- If you attend Tai Chi, closures follow the Syracuse City School district and again you can contact the office.



Minister	Rev. Jo VonRue	ministerjrev@gmail.com
Director of Religious Education	Stacy Sceiford	stacymaydre@gmail.com
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Book Keeper	Leslie Dendy	lesliedendy@yahoo.com
Finance	Jennifer Newman	mamaslash@twcny.rr.com
Church Office	Teri Coon	office@mmuus.org



Battery Powered Vehicles (BEVs) are becoming much more common in Europe and Asia than in the US. US makers seem timid about making and selling them and American dealers don't generally push them. BEVs are practical even in our climate and even for trips and towing. Learn why owners of BEVs say they won't even consider buying a gas car anymore. Big Oil is not a fan of BEVs. The smart money believes in an expanding population of BEVs and is spending on rapid expansion of numbers of public fast charging stations. On trips we have found more than enough fast DC charging stations already but future growth taking place now will keep up with demand. Home charging at night is even more convenient and economical.

Here's your chance to meet with current MMUUS owners of Battery Powered Vehicles **February 15 at noon in the Memorial Room**. This won't be about hybrids. We will answer questions, discuss misconceptions, and share our experiences gained in driving more than 250,000 miles since 2017. There are good BEV choices that cost about the same as many of the gas cars we see in the church parking lot.

Take seven deep breaths and considerer buying or leasing a BEV as your next car or truck. Live more lightly on the earth and enjoy driving more.

"What a lovely way to spend a winter afternoon...."

Landscape paper crafting workshop

Sunday February 22, 2026 in the MM social hall (after social hour)

We will play with a quilting technique to create landscape scenes with paper, as in the picture above. Bring a lunch and learn about the technique together, then start creating around 12:15-12:30. This is expected to be a 3 hour workshop led by Stephanie Cross. This workshop is open to friends of MM folks as well! Youth 10 years or older are welcomed.



Price \$40 pp inclusive of materials and snacks.

Maximum 10 people; Minimum 4

Bring: Lunch and drink for yourself, scissors and/or rotary cutter/mat (blade will need to be replaced after cutting paper); straight edge & your creativity! Wear comfortable clothes which could get glue on them.

Register/pay:

Register by emailing Stephanie Cross at mscross1234@gmail.com

Payment via Venmo (Stephanie-Cross-75;note Feb 22 workshop); check to MMUUS (note: Feb 22 workshop) or cash (with a note that it is for the Feb 22 workshop!) given to the MMUUS office. Payment must be received prior to the workshop.



Back by popular demand, the Choir and Twisted Sisters will sponsor an after worship Taco Bar Extravaganza on **Sunday, February 8th**. Please join us for this community-building fundraiser, featuring hard and soft taco shells, seasoned meats, refried beans, black beans and rice, all the fixings, and of course, dessert.

Suggested donation: Adults \$0-\$10, Children \$0-\$6, and Families \$0-\$20.

Family Bingo & Potluck Party

Saturday, March 21, 2026 5-7pm

Chase those winter blues away as you join us for our annual Bingo Potluck Party! Great fun for all ages...and EVERYONE is a winner!

What to bring:

a dish to pass (beverages provided),

your own place settings (so we can be good stewards of the earth)

a prize to donate to the prize table from each person playing

Cost \$1/person (to be donated to our Change for Charity fund)

Questions? Contact Julie Daniel: jdanielyoga@gmail.com ; call/text: 315-729-8179

Save the Date April 18, 2026 for the Talents and Treasures Auction



Our annual FUNdraising auction has a new date. Please save the weekend of April 17 and 18th to participate in the May Memorial **Talents and Treasures Auction**. We have expanded the auction to two days so that we can gather and stage items on Friday and hold the auction on the evening of April 18th. For those new to May Memorial this is our biggest FUNdraiser and we hope that everyone can find a way to participate.

We have found that the items which sell the most and which offer our community the most benefit are the events which our members offer to the community, such as hosting a breakfast, lunch or dinner, a game night, a skill, workshop or trip to a museum with lunch. If you have offered this type of event in the past, thank you! Please consider offering the same or something else again for this year's auction. We also know that gift cards to restaurants, theaters, museums, etc. are popular. Please think about what you can donate to add to the selection of items for people to bid!

"Many hands make light work" and there are many ways you can help make the Talents and Treasures auction a fun and successful event. If you have questions or suggestions or NEW IDEAS please contact Cynthia Carter, Stephanie Cross or Dawn Mendelsohn.



Newberry & Verch on Friday, February 6 @ 8pm.

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

Skye Consort & Emma Bjorling on Friday, February 20 @ 8pm.

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

UPCOMING Events

These are events happening in the church that are open to anyone to attend

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Tuesday	2/3	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	2/4	Vespers	8pm	Zoom Only
Thursday	2/5	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Friday	2/6	FOLKUS	8pm	
Sunday	2/8	Sunday lunch	After service	
		Soul Matters Sharing Circle	12:30pm	Teenz
Monday	2/9	Twisted Sisters	7pm	Teenz
Tuesday	2/10	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Democracy in Action	6:30pm	Zoom Only
Wednesday	2/11	Vespers	8pm	Zoom Only
Thursday	2/12	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Friday	2/12	UUIP - Craft Circle	7pm	Zoom Only
Saturday	2/14	Saturday SoUUp and Soul	5pm	Social Hall
Sunday	2/15	BEV Meeting (see page 6 for details)	Noon	Memorial Room
Tuesday	2/17	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	2/18	Vespers	8pm	Zoom Only
Thursday	2/19	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Friday	2/20	FOLKUS	8pm	
Sunday	2/22	Fresh Faces	11:45am	Memorial Room
		UUIP - Craft Circle	12:15pm	Teenz
		Landscape Workshop	After coffee hour (see page 7 for details and to sign up)	
Tuesday	2/24	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	2/25	Vespers	8pm	Zoom Only
Thursday	2/26	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary

May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society

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Office Hours:

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

Days off are Friday and Saturday

Contact us:

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315-446-8920