

May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society Newsletter

March 2026
Volume 89
Issue 3



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

Sunday worship service 10:30am



*"Love, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."*

~Reinhold Niebuhr



Rev. Jo and Elenore

About ten years ago I tried participating in the 12 step recovery program of Overeaters Anonymous for my food addiction. It ultimately did not work for me for a multitude of reasons (mostly b/c I could not get out of my own way)... I know what an incredibly valuable program it is and am thankful that it works wonders for so many. I am not sure if I've ever preached or talked about this part of my life. I recently realized that I don't remember the last time I preached about addiction and recovery - I knew it was time again. I should be talking about it more than once every few years.

Many people in my life (maybe you're one of them) are either in active addiction, recovery, or share their lives with someone on that journey. It is a real and very common part of being human. I grew up with a mom who was a food addict... She turned to her addiction to help cope with the stress of an abusive family. I learned at a very young age that food was safety. will stop and be clear that I'm not fat because I have a food addiction. Fatness is just part of who I am as a human, and we should not conflate the two things.

I watched my mother's food addiction, never knowing how to help her; I was a child and did not know how to help her get the support she actually needed. Over the years I have struggled with my food addiction in one way or another, and I have many guilty feelings about how I was not able to truly help my mother (who died of Covid in 2020). Addiction, whether the addiction is yours or is holding someone you love hostage is hard to cope with, and getting the help you need is imperative to your health. I will be preaching about addiction and recovery on March 1st. I will share more of my story then in hopes that by bringing my story into our space, we can all hold each other as whole and holy beings.

Our monthly theme in March is "Paying Attention." This month, I hope we will be inspired to pay more attention to all those we encounter. Whether they are very close beloveds or people we only know on the periphery... we often struggle with the same things but may have different names for them. Let's pay attention in a way that helps us create deeper connections in our lives.

I love you all so much.

"After The Call: Rev. Jo's Eyewitness Account of her January 2026 trip to Minneapolis"

Worship Associate David Mendelsohn gave a very powerful reflection during this service as well. Rev. Jo begins her reflection at 6:49.

<https://youtu.be/SwHGtKJ1-Ic?si=yISKOCODdIWcjMDJ>

<h1>March</h1> <h2>Worship Calendar</h2>		
3/1	One Moment At a Time: What Addiction & Recovery Teaches Us About Being Human	Rev. Jo VonRue
3/8	International Women's Day	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Karen Sgarlata
3/15		Rev. David Weissbard Worship Associate Karen Sgarlata
3/22	Gethsemane Celebration	Rev. Jo VonRue
3/29	When We Stop Looking Away	Rev. Jo VonRue

<https://zoom.us/j/95274927371?pwd=H5pJFsXMxCMCfJlOWupV326HUrh1Fo.1>



Meeting ID: 952 7492 7371

Passcode: 210281



One tap mobile

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The Sunday Luncheon scheduled for March 8th will go on as planned...even if our faithful organizer Eliza Bailey will be in full recovery mode! Come join us as the May Memorial Men prepare their favorite soups, salads and other goodies. Contact Kevin King (kkingjag@gmail.com or 315-729-7741) if you are able to help out



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JUNE 14 – 21, 2026

MEET THE MOMENT: TOGETHER EVERYWHERE

General Assembly is approaching!

From the UUA [GA website](#): "*General Assembly 2026, Meet the Moment: Together Everywhere*, will unfold in two parts with a midweek pause. From Sunday, June 14 to Tuesday, June 16, delegates will engage in fully virtual General Sessions focused on the business of the Association. Programming resumes Friday, June 19 through Sunday, June 21 with worship, featured speakers, and Meet the Moment themed programs that can be experienced online, at the studio site in Louisville, or in participating local congregations."

This is a little different from past UUA meetings and it will allow significant participation by interested parties without the need to travel. Consider tuning in to the sessions if you are interested.

GA Delegates Wanted: MMUUS would like to have one or more delegates who will have the authority to vote in GA sessions. Please see Rev Jo and/or the web site above for more information about what it means to be a delegate. If you have interest in being a May Memorial delegate for the 2026 GA, please let Rev Jo or Peter McClure know. Thanks!

Ministerial Evaluation-Your Voice Matters: The Committee on Ministry is tasked each year with evaluating our minister and the ministry of our congregation. This evaluation has taken various forms over the last several years. This year, the Committee has developed five questions meant to elicit discussion and reflection about what is and has been meaningful to each person over the past year. These forms will be available in print as well as electronically. Respondents are required to include their name when completing the form. Feel free to discuss avenues for sharing specific concerns with a committee member. Contact information is available in the office or directory.

We are offering several times for congregants to meet with the committee if they wish while completing their questionnaire.

The dates are as follows:

- **March 8** facilitated by Dick Pearson and Eric Petit-McClure and **March 15** facilitated by Kevin King and LeeAnn McKinney; both taking place in the **Memorial Room** immediately following worship. There will also be **Zoom** availability following the service on **March 22** (Dick and Kevin facilitating). If you choose to take a paper copy home, please return it to MMUUS by **March 29**. The results will be summarized and a written report shared with the Board and congregation. We are hoping to have as many as possible participate to obtain a comprehensive assessment.

HISTORY CORNER



Rev. Samuel Joseph May - Committed Pacifist



Rev. Samuel Joseph May, for whom our congregation is named, was the second settled minister of the Unitarian Congregational Society of Syracuse, serving from 1845-1868. Rev. May was involved in every major social reform movement of the mid-19th century. Last month we wrote about his work to abolish slavery. Given the on-going saber-rattling by those in power in our country, we thought this would be a good time to write about his views on war and peace.

- After meeting noted Unitarian peace reformer Noah Worcester in 1819, **May resolved to dedicate himself to the cause of peace.**
- In his first ministerial position in 1826, Rev. May helped establish the Windham County (CT) Peace Society. Although he led the society for a time, his more radical view of **opposition to all war** put him at odds with others in the organization.
- Not wanting to “encourage militarism,” Rev. May **refused to serve as chaplain for the local militia, and being opposed to the death penalty, he would not officiate at the execution of criminals.** In his view, killing perpetuated the idea that humans are “innately depraved” (Yacovone, 1991, p. 29*).
- **Rev. May felt ambivalent about the fact that the United States was born out of a cruel and violent war.** He did not believe that the use of force was “justified by God.”
- Rev. May was **an outspoken opponent of the Mexican American War (1846-1848) and the annexation of Texas.** In 1846, President Polk (a proponent of “manifest destiny”) presented the conflict as a “patriotic necessity” and an opportunity to open up vast new spaces for settlement. **Rev. May saw it as a thinly veiled attempt to grab new land for the expansion of slavery.**
- **May and other Unitarian “radicals” issued their own declaration against the Mexican conflict** after the American Unitarian Association failed to officially condemn it.
- Rev. May **criticized Syracuse’s *Daily Star* newspaper for inflaming pro-war sentiment and urging young men to sign up. In turn, the newspaper accused him of treason.**
- In **June of 1846, Rev. May and nearly 100 other citizens (the “Friends of Peace”)** called a meeting **to protest the war.** When their meeting was broken up by protesters, they reconvened elsewhere and selected a five-member “business committee,” which included Rev. May. **The committee drafted 13 resolutions that condemned all wars, denounced the Mexican War, and urged young men to refuse military service.**
- The next day, **the Friends of Peace published a scathing indictment of the *Daily Star* and the protesters who disrupted their antiwar meeting.**

It is a credit to Rev. Samuel May that he did not compromise his principles in the face of so much public criticism and a credit to the Unitarian congregation that they were accepting of his antiwar activism.

Mary Louise Edwards & Kent Lindstrom

MMUUS History Committee (history@mmuus.org)

*Yacovone, D. (1991), Samuel Joseph May and the Dilemmas of the Liberal Persuasion. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.



Community,
Conversations,
Connections
with Rev. Jo



Soul Matters
SHARING CIRCLE

The next Soul Matters Sharing Circle will be **March 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.

**Democracy Action Adult Education Class CHANGED
March 10 is canceled; final workshop is TBA.**

Rev. Jo has decided that she is going to offer the final Democracy Action Adult Ed class as a one off 2 hour workshop for folks interested in organizing and thinking through the "what comes next".

The last class will happen in April or May, please pay attention to the newsletter and eblasts to learn about the final date and to register.



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 March 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!



Minister
Director of Religious Education
Director of Music
Board President
Book Keeper
Finance
Church Office

Rev. Jo VonRue ministerjrev@gmail.com
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Jennifer Newman mamaslash@twcnny.rr.com
Teri Coon office@mmuus.org

Unirondack Community Building weekend 2026 Save the date!

Friday Sept 18 - Sunday Sept 20th, 2026

This group needs an organizing team since Stephanie Cross is transitioning out of the role she has held for over 15 years.

Interested in being a part of keeping the annual weekend going?

Contact Stephanie_mscross1234@gmail.com and we will set up a virtual meeting of all involved.

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.

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.

There will be a reception for the artists on Wednesday, March 25, 2026 from 4:00-7:00. All are welcome.

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



Tim O'Brien & Jan Fabricius on Friday, March 6 @ 8pm.

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

Cantrip on Friday, March 20 @ 8pm.

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

Talents, Treasures and Adventures Auction 2026



Saturday evening April 18th. 5:30-7:30 pm - in person

This is when we will have the final bidding, light refreshments, music and fun. On which items will you be out-bidding your friends ??

Online bidding will be from April 8-16; "Buy it now" pricing will be offered for many items.

April 3 - final items accepted

Dawn M, Cynthia C and Stephanie C (Auction Committee), are thrilled that folks are offering talents, adventures and community hosting opportunities for this 2026 auction. Thank you.

You can help us make this the best auction yet! Please consider making a donation.

Need some ideas?

- Do you have a cottage or a boat you could share?
- Could you host a dinner, or a picnic, or a game night?
- Are you good at and enjoy painting indoor rooms? That would be an appreciated item!
- How about teaching a couple of lessons - music, woodworking, knitting, or whatever?
- Are you known for a specialty item that you could make?
- Or maybe you have a treasure that needs a new home. (see guidelines below)

Donation forms can be picked up at church or you can email, Cynthia Carter, Stephanie Cross and Dawn Mendelsohn at auction@mmuus.org

Below is the policy for "Treasures" since we have experienced that these items take the most time and energy to process and often are the ones that don't sell!

Policy/Guidelines for Treasures:

No collectibles or decorative house items unless made by an artist.

Functional household items will be accepted with discretion.

No holiday items

No manufactured, store-bought clothing

No purses

Accessories, such as handmade hats, mittens, shawls and scarves will generally be accepted.

Unopened liquor is accepted

Backpacks and totes in gently used or new condition are OK.

Jewelry – generally accepted.

Vintage/antique items – depend on the item.

Books – good condition – sets, collections, baskets most desired

UUA items accepted

Unique items – considered by the committee on an individual basis

If something is not sold, it will be returned to the person who donates it.

No items accepted after April 3



Looking for ways to help out at May Memorial?



Consider signing up to help host **Coffee Hour** or serve as **Usher**. Both are very important to the smooth running of Sunday morning. Use the sign up link in the eblast or see Teri in the office for more details.



Buildings & Grounds

Know how to fix stuff?
We can use your talents on the Buildings and Grounds team!



After service on Sunday's we are always looking for folks to assist with making the bank deposit. You'll be working with Teri in the office to assemble the deposit. If you'd like to help out please see Teri in the office.

Other volunteer opportunities:

- Kitchen coordinator: We need someone to assist Teri, in the office, with organizing the kitchen. This includes helping to keep track of inventory.
- Fundraising: Help with our Talents, Treasures & Adventures Auction or plan new events to encourage giving
- Gallery Exhibits: Work with our Arts Committee to find local artists to show their work at May Memorial
- Hospitality: Be a greeter, share one of your favorite recipes during a potluck or during coffee hour, or share a note or visit a member recovering from illness
- Music and Choir: sing or play during services and at events
- Religious Education for children and youth: Guide and nurture our young people in spiritual growth and exploration
- Social and Climate Justice: Support efforts to live sustainably and to create a more loving and just community; assist in our work to dismantle racism and other oppressions as we build our Beloved Community



Admin office hours:

Mon-Thurs drop in hours: 9am—2pm

Sunday: 8am—1pm

Additional hours available by appointment, contact the office to get on the schedule.

The office is closed on Friday and Saturday and on government holidays, please refer to the eblast and the Monday Office Update for closings.

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	3/3	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	3/4	Vespers	8pm	Zoom Only
Thursday	3/5	Men's Lunch	Noon	Munjed's in Westcott
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Sunday	3/8	Daylight Saving Time- Move clocks forward one hour		
		Soul Matters	12:30pm	Teenz
		Sunday Lunch	After Service	
Monday	3/9	Twisted Sisters	7pm	Teenz Room
Tuesday	3/10	Democracy In Action	6:30pm	Zoom Only
Wednesday	3/11	Vespers	8pm	Zoom Only
Thursday	3/12	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Friday	3/13	UUIP Crafting Circle	7pm	Zoom Only
Tuesday	3/17	Writers Group	10am	Teenz Room
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	3/25	Vespers	8pm	Zoom Only
Thursday	3/19	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Saturday	3/21	Family Bingo and Potluck	5pm	Social Hall
Sunday	3/22	Fresh Faces, Coffee and Conversation	11:45am	Memorial Room
		UUIP Crafting Circle	12:15pm	Teenz Room
Tuesday	3/24	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	3/25	Vespers	8pm	Zoom Only
		March Artist Reception	4-7pm	Social Hall
Thursday	3/26	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Tuesday	3/21	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall

May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society

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Syracuse, NY 13214
315.446.8920
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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