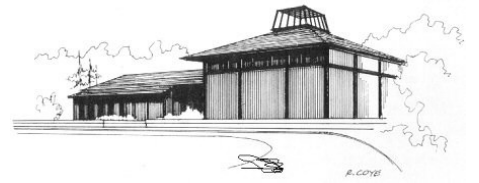


May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society Newsletter

May 2026
Volume 89
Issue 5



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

Sunday worship service 10:30am



I'm writing this after having just finished a session with my Spiritual Director. We talked a little about our worship service on April 19th following the tragic loss of one of our beloveds. She asked me "and how did that service feel in your body?" Saturday night before the service I was sitting in my fear that whatever I had to offer you would not be enough to heal your(our) weary souls.

As I have shared a few times during worship these last few months, my hormones have their own agenda and they leave me with less control over my emotions than I am used to having. When Sunday morning arrived I was not sure how it might go during worship, but I was surprised to find that I felt much more emotionally stable than I thought I might be. And, reflecting back, I know the reason was because of all of you. This community, all of you give me so much strength... and like I preached on Sunday morning, WE are a beacon for one another when things are weary in our lives.

Our spiritual theme for the month of May is Awakening Curiosity. I find that in these days after the tragedy, I am much more alive to curiosity in my life, my ministry, and in myself. I'm checking in with myself more and asking questions about my feelings, checking in with my body and finding the places where the dis-ease lives.

It is my hope for you that when the ground gives way, however that might happen in your life this year... that you are able to awaken the curiosity within yourself and turn to wonder... wonder about yourself, your feelings, your body and whatever greater questions come up for you. Awakening the curiosity in yourself will also allow you to be open to curiosity about others in your own life who may need your empathy or understanding. Becoming more curious about ourselves and the people and world around us will only allow for us to grow and change into deeper, more compassionate humans.



Important Notice from Treasurer - Congregational Budget Meeting and Annual Meeting

On **May 31, at 12:00**, the **Congregational Budget Meeting** will be held to discuss the proposed budget for the fiscal year from July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027. If you are new to this process, the best way to prepare is to familiarize yourself with the current year's budget -- just email jennifernewman359@gmail.com if you would like an electronic copy sent to you, or if you have any questions. The Annual Meeting will be held on June 14, at which time we need a quorum (please attend if you are a member in good standing) to vote on the updated proposed budget, officers, etc.

Annual Land Stewardship Sunday is May 3, 2026



We will have a short worship service, starting at 10:30, then will go outside and take care of our land, (a few will stay inside to clean an assigned spaces).

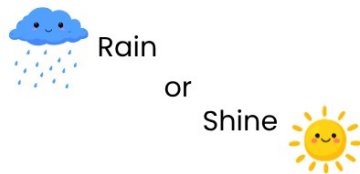
Inside Tasks

- Kitchen cabinets & cupboards:
 - Wipe down/organize shelves
- Refrigerator
- Clean up coat room

Outside Tasks

- Parking lot cleanup of branches & debris
- Playground leaves raked and removed
- Weeding:
 - Front bushes
 - Memorial Garden & lower lawn
- Grasses inside the wall will need to be removed
- Walkway to the parking lot:
 - Cut back tree branches & bushes
 - Rake out leaves/debris

A light lunch will be provided for when we are done



Wear clothes for working outdoors



Bring bug spray and sun screen



Bring: tarps, rakes, pruning tools (shrubs/trees), wheelbarrows if you can, please remember to take them home too!

		<h2 style="color: red;">Worship Calendar</h2>
5/3	<p style="text-align: center;">Land Stewardship We'll have a short service then break out into work groups to take care of our land (details page: 2)</p>	Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford
5/10	<p style="text-align: center;">Do We Have Enough Love?</p>	Rev. Douglas Taylor Worship Associate Ruth Yanai
5/17	<p style="text-align: center;">Won't You Lead Me There? Music Sunday</p>	Director of Music Glenn Kime Rev. Jo VonRue
5/24	<p style="text-align: center;">Celebrating the Earth</p>	Worship Associate Karen Sgarlata Worship Associate Noah Lapidus
5/31	<p style="text-align: center;">Coming of Age: This I Believe</p>	Rev. Jo VonRue Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford



<https://zoom.us/j/95274927371?pwd=H5pJFsXMxCMcfJlOwupV326HUrh1Fo.1>

2025-2026

Zoom Link

Meeting ID: 952 7492 7371

Passcode: 210281

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,95274927371# US (New York)

+16469313860,,95274927371# US



Locking Doors

My loves, starting in June, we will lock the front door of the church at 10:45 on Sunday mornings. This is part of our commitment to resist ICE entering our building without a warrant and to protect those who are vulnerable. The lock is a motion-sensor magnet, so if we ever needed to exit the sanctuary quickly, we could. If you arrive after 10:45 and need to get in, simply ring the bell on the wall of the church and Teri will let you in, she will ask that you identify yourself. Over the next two months, we will develop an ICE response plan and hold a drill, so we are ready if that day ever comes.

HISTORY CORNER



Rev. Samuel Joseph May – Actively Engaged Citizen of Syracuse



Two history committee articles this year have highlighted Rev. Samuel Joseph May's involvement in social issues of the mid-19th century. In February, we wrote about his work to abolish slavery, and in March we highlighted/talked about his pacificism. This month we focus on Rev. May's contributions as a well-known and highly regarded citizen of the rapidly growing city.

When Rev. May moved to Syracuse in 1845, it was a rough canal town, and he was bothered by the severe poverty he encountered – worse than any he had witnessed in New England. Within a year he was involved in opening a **home for orphans**. He worked with other ministers for state legislation to provide housing and education for the impoverished **“canal boys,”** and he helped start a **school on the Onondaga Reservation**.

Just three years after coming to Syracuse, May helped draft a resolution that established the **school system for the city**. He was elected to the **Board of Education** in 1864 and served as president of the Board from 1865 to 1869. He became known for his support of **public education for all students**, including blacks and girls, and for the **elimination of corporal punishment** in the city schools. *

Although Rev. May argued vigorously against the “hell fire and brimstone” preachers and evangelists who sometimes held revivals in Syracuse, he **often cooperated with local ministers on issues of common concern**. For many years, he and Rev. Jermain Loguen of the AME Zion Church worked together to combat slavery and to help fugitive slaves. The homes of both men were part of the Underground Railroad, and both were involved in the famous “Jerry Rescue” of 1851.

With philanthropists and members of his church, Rev. May was involved in attempting to set up the first hospital in Syracuse. When that effort failed, they gave their support to Father James O'Hara of St. Mary's Catholic Church and the five Sisters of St. Francis who established **St. Joseph's Hospital** in 1869. The authors of *May No One Be a Stranger* (1988) note that Rev. May became well-liked in the Catholic community because he **objected to the prejudice that some strict Protestants showed toward the nuns**.

May was friends with a Jewish family in Boston, and when he came to Syracuse, **he did not hesitate to work with the Jewish community** here. Accounts of his funeral state that the congregation of the Temple Society of Concord attended as a group.

In Memoriam, published by the congregation a year after May's 1871 death, contains speeches and tributes given at his funeral. In it Rev. May is described as a “public spirited” minister who “came out of his pulpit” to mingle with the people. He participated in public meetings and could be counted on to support every worthwhile civic project in the city of Syracuse. *In Memoriam* can be found at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/maysamuel/maysamuel.html>.

As always, we can be proud that our congregation bears the name of Rev. S. J. May.

Mary Louise Edwards

MMUUS History Committee (history@mmuus.org)

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



“Won't You Lead Me There?”

The Choir presents a service of music that speaks of journey and longing. Each piece varies widely from each other, but all have something to say to us today. Please join us.



Community,
Conversations,
Connections
with Rev. Jo



The next Soul Matters Sharing Circle will be **May 17th** 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 May 24th** 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!

May Memorial Talents, Treasures and Adventures Auction 2026



A huge success!

Many people worked/played together to make this a successful event!

Thank you to everyone who donated talents, treasures and adventures to this year's auction.

People really stepped up with their generosity and creativity.

After all, without those donations, we would not have an auction!

Special thanks to:

Janet Heimstra who led the kitchen and refreshment portion of the event with Linda Wobus as her partner. Janet also procured many gift cards from businesses in the Fayetteville and Manlius area. Thank you to everyone who donated talents, treasures and adventures to this year's auction. And MANY thanks to the group of people who brought delicious food for the event.

Joe Cleveland and **Dana Cooke** provided great music for the evening and about 50 people attended the evening fun.

Lisa Saile and **Teri Coon** who were great help during the auction and on Sunday to help with sign in, registering bids and cashing people out.

Dawn Mendelsohn, **Cynthia Carter** and **Stephanie Cross** met weekly since January to plan and create the auction.

As in previous years, the Adventures category was the most successful and we especially like that one since the adventures are all experiences of people spending time together in community.

And...drumroll please... the final amount we raised was over \$10K!



Robert Niedzwiecki



Local artist and former Fayetteville Manlius Art Teacher, C, will be showing a collection of his Oil Landscape Paintings In our social hall from May 1, 2026 - June 20, 2026.



"Music for Palestine" to Raise Support for Displaced Refugees in Gaza

Musicians, activists and community members are raising awareness of and support for the Palestinian plight in Gaza with a special fundraiser titled "Music for Palestine." The event is **Saturday, May 16, 2pm** at May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society (3800 East Genesee St., Syracuse). Open to the public, attendees are encouraged to make a tax-deductible donation in-person, online or by mail.

May Memorial has always believed that our commitment to justice lives in the choices we make and the people we rise with. Hosting this concert in solidarity with Palestinians living in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank is one way we live that commitment out loud.

The program includes the world premiere of *If I Must Die*, a poignant setting of the poem by Refaat Alareer, who was assassinated in an Israeli airstrike in 2023.

The piece — made famous by Jordanian singer Farah Siraj — has been adapted for trombone octet and will feature local performing artist Laura Enslin as soprano soloist.

Rounding out the afternoon are other instrumental and vocal selections, along with readings and remarks by Pulitzer Prize winning author, Mosab Abu Toha.

Central New York is home to hundreds of Palestinians, including Mr. Abu Toha. They and their allies have organized numerous vigils and protests centering around solidarity for the more than 72,000 Palestinians killed in Gaza since October 2023.

Further information: <https://cnyarts.org/events/events/view/music-for-palestine-to-raise-support-for-displaced-refugees-in-gaza/>



Unirondack Community Building weekend 2026 Save the date!

Friday Sept 18 - Sunday Sept 20th, 2026

Molly Letsch has stepped up to gather a group to organize Unirondack this year. Please contact her if you would like to help on the team. mletsch@gmail.com



[Leslie Mendelson with Steve McEwan](#) on Friday, May 1 @ 8pm.

[Garnet Rogers](#) on Friday, May 15 @ 8pm.

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

Ushers/Greeters:

This role is very important part of Sunday morning. Ushers/greeters are responsible for assisting new visitors in navigating our church building, handing out the announcements and large print Orders of Service as necessary.

You will be responsible for the collection of the offering, taking attendance and counting the offering after service.

Arrival time should be 10am (unless otherwise noted)

We do need 2 folks in this role.



Coffee Hour hosts:

Coffee Hour host commitment is: arrive about 9:30am to get coffee started, plan on staying until 12:30pm.

Your role is hospitality: making coffee, heating water, plating cookies/baked goods, setting up coffee condiment station. After coffee hour clean up of the kitchen.



UUIP– Crafting Circle

This month: Sunday May 24th

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.

In-person on the 4th Sunday in the Teenz Room at 12:15 pm.

Reminder

Rev. Jo will NEVER ask for gift cards or money.

Please watch out for scams asking for such items.

There are many email/text/phone scams going around so please be aware. If you get something that does not seem right please contact the office so we can sort it out for you.



- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Minister | Rev. Jo VonRue | ministerjrev@gmail.com |
| Director of Religious Education | Stacy Sceiford | stacymaydre@gmail.com |
| Director of Music | Glenn Kime | gkimeorganist@gmail.com |
| Board President | Peter McClure | peterrogermcclure@gmail.com |
| Book Keeper | Leslie Dendy | lesliedendy@yahoo.com |
| Finance | Jennifer Newman | mamashlash@twcny.rr.com |
| Church Office | Teri Coon | office@mmuus.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>
Sunday	5/3	Land Stewardship Day	After service	Various
Tuesday	5/5	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	5/6	Vespers	8pm	Zoom Only
Thursday	5/7	Monthly Men's Lunch	Noon	Munjeds in Westcott
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Monday	5/11	Twisted Sisters	7pm	Teenz Room
Tuesday	5/12	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	5/13	Vespers	8pm	Zoom Only
Thursday	5/14	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Saturday	5/16	Concert for Palestine	2pm	Sanctuary
Sunday	5/17	Music Sunday	10:30am	Sanctuary
		Soul Matters Sharing Circle	12:30pm	Teenz Room
Tuesday	5/19	Writers Group	10am	Teenz Room
Wednesday	5/20	Vespers	8pm	Zoom Only
Thursday	5/21	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Sunday	5/24	Fresh Faces, Coffee and Conversation	11:45am	Memorial Room
		UUIP - Crafting Circle	12:15pm	Teenz Room
Tuesday	5/26	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Wednesday	5/27	Vespers	8pm	On Zoom Only
Thursday	5/28	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Sunday	5/31	Finance Budget Meeting	12pm	Sanctuary

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