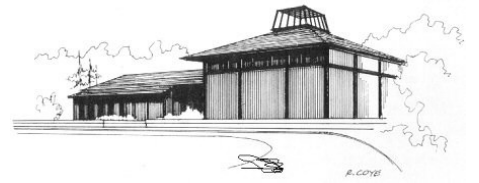


May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society Newsletter

May 2026
Volume 89
Issue 6



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

Sunday worship service 10:30am

The Gift of Partnerships



My loves, I want to first speak briefly about our partnership with Gethsemane United Methodist Church.

Gethsemane is a small, aging congregation located in a zip code with a richly diverse immigrant population. They run a food pantry, a personal care closet, a diaper ministry, and a thrift store. More than 95% of the people they serve are immigrants to this country and this ministry serves over 1000 folks each month.

We found out about their program several years ago and gradually built a partnership with them. The leaders at Gethsemane tell us regularly that their program would not survive without the dedicated volunteers from May Memorial and the financial gifts and donations of food and thrift items that our community provides.

Their minister is Pastor Andy, himself a Black immigrant with a wife and children here in the United States. We want to be transparent with you: our partners at Gethsemane hold different views than we do about ICE and Homeland Security. I am in an ongoing conversation with Pastor Andy about this and he has told me that if ICE comes to their door, he will ask our volunteers to comply. We would not make that same choice here at May Memorial. But it is not our place, as mostly white and mostly privileged people, to tell others with marginalized identities what risks they must take in the name of partnership. That is paternalism at best.

We partner with Gethsemane because hungry people need food, babies need diapers... Because families new to this country deserve dignity, kindness, and the kind of compassion we can share with them in their hardest times. We do not withdraw from the vulnerable because we disagree with how someone else navigates their own survival.

Our UU values call us to be in right relationship with those who are marginalized. Not just when it is comfortable and everyone can agree. And certainly not just when the politics are clean and the path is clear. My loves, the moral arc does not bend on its own. It bends because people like you and me show up especially when it is complicated and uncomfortable, even when it would be easier to walk away for the sake of righteousness.

Righteousness is not the same as purity. History is full of people who watched suffering from a safe distance and called it integrity. Justice is not something we protect by stepping back from the people who need us most.

We will keep showing up for Gethsemane. We hope you will too. If you have any questions about our Gethsemane partnership, please come have a conversation with me.

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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.

Continued from page 1

And finally, a Reflection of our year together before I take my summer leave

Eight years in, and I still catch myself thinking, *how did I get this lucky?*

This has been a genuinely good year at May Memorial. Eighteen new members joined us, pledged, and showed up. Fresh Faces Coffee and Conversation began, with four or more new and prospective members gathering every fourth Sunday. Our Worship Associates lead full and meaningful services on my Sundays away.. Soul Matters is so full we are talking about two rooms. Our Coming of Age youth (along with Stacy and I) went on overnights and we all came back changed, in the best possible ways. Our RE kids are thriving. Vespers keeps growing. Saturday Soup and Soul fed people in more ways than one.

You marched. You vigiled. You organized, fundraised, showed up at press conferences, and stood with your neighbors when it mattered. You built a benefit concert. You welcomed new citizens. You kept showing up for Gethsemane each week. The Care Ring held people. The Board led faithfully. Our leaders kept the lights on, literally and spiritually. None of this happened because of me. It happened because of you. I get to point to this community and say, with my whole heart, that you are building something real here. Something worth showing up for.

Thank you. For trusting me with your lives, your questions, and your grief. For being the kind of congregation that makes me proud to say I am your minister.

Here's to what comes next.
I love you all so much.

Rev. Jo



Community,
Conversations,
Connections
with Rev. Jo



The next Soul Matters Sharing Circle will be **June 21st**
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.



Join us on Sunday **June 7th** after service for our final Sunday
lunch of the church year!

This will be a BBQ lunch hosted by our Board of Trustees and friends!

Help is still needed for the final after-worship lunch of the church year, a barbecue on June 7th. If you would like to lend a hand by doing a job, making a picnic salad, or donating to the bulk purchase of food, please contact Eliza Bailey at ElizaLafayette@gmail.com. She will share the sign-up sheet with you.

Joint Summer Services May Memorial/First UU

This summer we will be sharing services with First UU. The difference this year is we will be using the Zoom link specific to the church.

Visit the May Memorial UU Website for further details:

mmuus.org

Services at May Memorial UU
3800 East Genesee St

First UU
109 Waring Rd

Zoom Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/93406325882?pwd=q87IAEXOU6nCiFahQaoNLmKX9YFkqw.1>

Zoom Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/92757934913>

Password: chalice

7/5	Worship Associates Karan Sgarlata and Ruth Yanai
7/19	Worship Associates Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken and David Mendelsohn
8/2	Worship Associates Noah Lapidus and Karen Sgarlata
8/16	Worship Associates Eliza Bailey
8/30	Worship Associates David Howe and Charlie Bagby

6/28	Jim D'Aloisio and Paul Barfoot
7/12	TBA
7/26	TBA
8/9	TBA
8/23	TBA
9/6	Poetry Sharing



June Worship Calendar		
6/7	Pride/New Member Sunday	Rev. Jo VonRue Worship Associate Ruth Yanai
6/14	Flower Communion	Rev. Jo VonRue Director of Religious Education Worship Associate Eliza Bailey
6/21	General Assembly	Worship Associate Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken
6/28	First UU	We will join First UU at 109 Waring Road or on Zoom Summer Zoom Links are on Page: 3

<https://zoom.us/j/95274927371?pwd=H5pJFsXMxCMcfJIOWupV326HUr1Fo.1>

2025-2026
Zoom Link

Meeting ID: 952 7492 7371

Passcode: 210281

One tap mobile

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+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 - Champion of Women's Rights



Reverend Samuel Joseph May was involved in every social reform movement of the mid-19th century. In this article, we highlight his work to promote equal rights for women.

- As a young man, Sam May didn't question the traditional views of women's roles or rights. That changed after antislavery activists Sarah and Angelina Grimke of South Carolina came to speak at his South Scituate (MA) church and spent a week there.

- Unlike many abolitionists, who considered the "woman question" to be a distraction from the fight to end slavery, Rev. May came to embrace the cause of women's rights, along with the rights of all who were oppressed.
- One of Rev. May's first sermons in Syracuse in 1845 was titled, "The Rights and Condition of Women." In it, he advocated for equal rights for women and for their full participation in public affairs. Published as **Women's Rights Tract #1**, his sermon was distributed widely before the 1848 Seneca Falls convention and became a key document for the women's rights movement.
- Rev. May invited women like Quaker Lucretia Mott and Congregational minister Antoinette Brown to speak from his pulpit in Syracuse and encouraged other ministers to do the same.
- After the Civil War, May helped organize the Onondaga County Suffrage Association and invited suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucy Stone to advocate for their cause at public meetings.
- At the first National Conference of Unitarian Churches in 1865, Rev. May suggested that churches send both men and women as delegates. His suggestion was controversial, but the next year, two women attended as substitute delegates, and the conference voted to let churches decide on the gender of their own delegates.

Rev. Samuel Joseph May was far ahead of his time in his views of gender equality and his advocacy for women's rights, including the right to vote. Biographer Donald Yacovone (1991) has called him "**one of the country's first feminists.**" *

Mary Louise Edwards
History Committee history@mmuus.org

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



An Evening OF Winds

Enjoy an evening of music with Chris Dranchek (Flute) and Don Milmore (French Horn) performing in a **wood-wind** quintet, **6:00pm Saturday June 6th** in the Sanctuary. There'll be a variety of fun music written specifically for wind quintets, including classical pieces and modern dances. It's free and concludes with refreshments and home baked cookies.



End of Church Year

6/7	Last Sunday lunch of the church year! Join us for a BBQ lunch hosted by the Board of Trustees and friends
6/14	Flower Communion/Annual Meeting
6/21	General Assembly watch party in our Social Hall (no Zoom)

Please attend the MMUUS Annual Meeting on June 14 at noon.
It's important that our members in good standing participate in person or by Zoom to approve a budget for next year and elect new Board and Nominating committee members.

Annual Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92771313999?pwd=QM0xPXYaI5MOaFKIU0LSdqFYhynqPw.1>

Meeting ID: 927 7131 3999

Passcode: 149437

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,92771313999# US (New York)

+16469313860,,92771313999# US

Rev. Jo's Summer Schedule

Rev. Jo will be away for study and rest during the summer from June 20th to August 17th.
She will return to email and church work on August 17th, and will preach for the first time in the Fall on September 13th which will also be our annual Water Communion. Rev. Jo will be available by phone for *Pastoral Emergencies* while she is away. Rev. Jo will only be checking her email sporadically through the summer and you should not expect a reply until August 20th

Admin Office Schedule

Teri will be taking off Monday June 22nd - Monday June 29th, returning to the office on Tuesday June 30.
There will be no communications from the office during this time. E-mail updates will resume after June 30th.
We will have a July and August combined newsletter so please have submissions to the office by **June 20th**.
Eblasts will still be weekly

During the months of July and August the Admin office will be open on Wednesdays,
working from home the rest of the week or by appointment.

Teri will also be in the office the Sunday's we host service at May Memorial.



Mark Your Calendars for Our Unirondack Community Weekend

Friday Sept 18th (4 pm) to Sunday Sept 20st (2 pm)

Unirondack, is a camp and conference center (Unirondack.org) in the Stillwater Reservoir area of the Adirondack park outside of Lowville, NY. Folks from May Memorial, First UU and other local UUs friends have enjoyed a relaxing community weekend here for close to 20 years. The camp offers comfortable accommodations, community meals, boating and swimming opportunities in the lake and hiking around the western Adirondacks. This is a *multi-generational* weekend, where folks get to know one another better through playing games, doing art, hiking, chatting about important and not-so-important topics and having fun together! If you prefer time alone in nature, that is an option too, since there are quiet spaces to read a book, journal or just contemplate the world. If it turns out to be a rainy weekend, we have many indoor options, with a spacious lodge, game area, theater, art studio and indoor dining hall. This is a wonderful community weekend where new connections are made and old connections strengthen, ALL are welcome. To keep costs reasonable, we don't hire catering but handle meal prep and clean up ourselves, everyone will need to help out with one meal preparation/setup or cleanup.

The costs for the weekend are: \$120/PP for those over 12 years old; Children 4-12 years \$110; Children 3 and under are free. This includes 2 nights lodging, 5 meals, use of all the Unirondack facilities/equipment and support from their staff on site. There is some scholarship money available for May Memorial folks to attend. The camp is about a 2.5 hour drive from the Syracuse area, people sometimes carpool. We often have room for friends; check if you want to invite someone outside of the MM or FUU communities. Dietary needs are accommodated.

Online Registration will open soon. Keep an eye open for a registration link in the coming weeks.

Payment will be made by:

- Check: (made out to: "Molly Letsch") hand-delivered or mailed to:
2680 State Route 80
Georgetown NY 13072
- Venmo: @Molly-Letsch; last 4 digits of phone 4511
- PayPal: Molly Letsch [paypal.me/mollyrletsch](https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/mollyrletsch)

If you prefer to pay cash, please email me (MLetsch@gmail.com) so the exchange can happen in person.

Remember some scholarship money is available for MM folks; ask about it if you would like to attend but the cost is feeling prohibitive at this time.

Questions? Want to help organize the weekend? Contact Molly Letsch: MLetsch@gmail.com



We continue to need regular donations for our Personal Care bags for Gethsemane.

Of particular need this month is:

- clothes detergent (42 oz)
- dish detergent (18 oz)
- shampoo (18-22 oz)
- bar soap
- toothpaste
- deodorant (for women & men)

Food donations:

- fresh garlic
- sugar
- spices
- black tea bags
- cake mixes and frosting

If you would like more suggestions for donations...please contact Julie Daniel: (call or text: 315-729-8179; email: jdanielyoga@gmail.com)

If you are unable to shop, please consider making a financial donation. Just write a check to MMUUS and put "Gethsemane " on the memo line of your check.

Clothes & Household Items: We now need clothing for spring/summer....so please send your donations our way (for kids and adults). We also need linens, kitchen items, small appliances. Toddler board books are always needed for our little ones who come through with their families.

Please leave your donations in the foyer in bins marked for Gethsemane.

If you chose to bring your donations to Gethsemane it is best to do this on Thursday mornings from 10-noon. Clothes/ shoes should be left upstairs to be sorted....other items can be delivered downstairs.



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	mamaslash@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>
Tuesday	6/2	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	6/4	Men's Monthly Lunch	Noon	Munjed's
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Saturday	6/6	Woodwind Quintet	6pm	Sanctuary
Sunday	6/7	First Sunday Lunch - BBQ	After Service	
Monday	6/8	Twisted Sisters	7pm	Teenz Room
Tuesday	6/9	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	6/11	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Spiritual Enrichment Group	6pm	Teenz
Sunday	6/14	Annual Meeting	Noon	Sanctuary
Tuesday	6/16	Writers Group	10am	Teenz
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	6/18	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
Sunday	6/21	General Assembly Service (no Zoom)	11:00am	Social Hall
		Soul Matters Sharing Circle	12:30pm	Teenz Room
Tuesday	6/23	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	6/25	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
Tuesday	6/30	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall

We will gather in our Social Hall to watch the UUA General Assembly.

There will not be a Zoom component to this service, you may join us in person or watch on your own with the link provided by the UUA.

Sunday Morning Worship: Join us for GA Sunday Worship on June 21, 2026, at 11:00 am ET, for a powerful and communal experience—the largest annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists in worship. **The livestream will be open to the public**—no registration required. A recording of the service will also be available on demand via YouTube shortly after the live broadcast (within a few minutes or even seconds). We are delighted to share that [Rev. Jen Youngsun Ryu](#) will lead Sunday Morning Worship at GA 2026.

Additional information: <https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2026>

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