

May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society Newsletter



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

September | 2026

Issue 8

Vol. 89

Beginnings



I use the summer as a mental and emotional reset. When I have some time away from the weekly worship planning and general operation responsibilities it gives me time to immerse myself in study and creativity. This summer I spent a lot of time sewing. I've always been a sewist but have only dived more seriously into clothing this past January. But this summer felt like a bit of a beginning for me.

I spent more time with clothing patterns and techniques that I've been learning and growing as a sewist and becoming more courageous to even create a few things without a pattern. I've spent so much of my life in a bit of a state of fear of failure. I've often not tried things because they seem scary... and maybe not because I think it will kill me but because I think I don't have what it takes to make it happen. So this new deep dive into clothing creation feels like a beginning for me because I'm finally taking time to lean in... to try things even when I think they might be hard or I might not understand them. I've been learning that I CAN do things, it may take a while to comprehend, and I may have to rip it out three times, or it may end up looking some kind of way... but I'm doing it and that feels really great right now.

It is a time of new beginnings for many of us. I wonder in what ways you can do some internal reflection on things you are not doing or trying because you think they will be hard or that you will fail? Maybe it's as simple as a new craft, but maybe there is something that feels a bit more risky. Maybe you need to apologize for a rift you created between you and someone else. Maybe you need to ask for a raise. Maybe you need to move from your current living situation. I'm not going to pretend that everything is going to be great if you try, because that's not always the case. In the equestrian world we often say "practice your guts," which basically means the only way to grow is if you make yourself a little uncomfortable. It's like when you are trying to build muscle. You can't build muscle by doing the same exercises every day. Your body gets used to those. You have to use heavier weights, or modify the movement, or do more repetitions... you have to stretch your muscles so they tear in just teeny tiny ways so that they can grow through the process of repair.

So, maybe your friend won't accept your apology, but at least you tried and KNOW you can do hard things even though they are scary.

My loves... take this time of new beginnings as an opportunity to grow and stretch and figure out what you are really capable of doing, I believe in you and am always here if it would help to chat.



2026-2027 Church Year

 Worship Calendar		
9/6	Service at First UU	Poetry Sharing
9/13	Gathered Waters, Gathered Lives: Water Communion	Rev. Jo VonRue, Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford, Youth Worship Associate
9/20	Staring at the Blank Page: Beginning Again	Rev. Jo VonRue, Worship Associate Charlie Bagby
9/27	TBD	Worship Associates David Mendelsohn and Noah Lapidus

26-27
Zoom Link

[https://zoom.us/j/95408499681?
pwd=oBGaW80fqfIWDTkQV2FE4q2QNvP8ie.1](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



Sunday
September 13th



Join us for our first Sunday of the new church year.
This will be our annual Water Communion service.
Please gather water during your travels this
summer to add to our community water collection



Community,
Conversations,
Connections
with Rev. Jo



Soul Matters
SHARING CIRCLE

Soul Matters to begin September 20th at 12:15
2nd Sunday each month 12:15pm starting in October

This year we are going to be using Soul Matters themes each month for worship. Each second Sunday we will meet after coffee hour at 12:15pm to go deeper into these themes to explore how they may be working in your life when you invite them in. There will be some work required ahead of each class, but it is very nominal, and you can still come to class even if you don't have time for the pre-class work!

This class will be offered in person only

You're welcome to bring a bagged lunch

We do need at least 5 people to run this class,

Please contact Teri in the office(office@mmuus.org) to register even if you have attended this group in the past.

Adult Coming of Age

What do you actually believe?

Join Rev. Jo on an 8 month journey through the big questions about God, human nature, death, justice, spirituality, and our own UU history. We'll share and shape our spiritual stories and end the year by writing and sharing our own credo.

- Zoom, 1st Sundays, 6:00pm-8:00pm, starting October 4th
- In person, 2nd Mondays, 2-4pm, starting October 5th (Oct 12 is a holiday)

Runs through May 2nd. We'll celebrate together at a Credo Service on May 30th.

Need at least 5 people registered to run either session. and you can register by emailing office@mmuus.org. When you contact the office you'll receive a link to the Zoom registration.



Saturday Soup and Soul:

following dates all 5-7pm

- Saturday October 10th
- December 5th
- February 6th
- April 17th

*Fall
is in the
air*



Our ongoing partnership with
Gethsemane United Methodist Church

Needed items for Gethsemane

Personal Care Bags:

Deodorant (men + Womens) toothpaste dish detergent (16oz +)
Clothes detergent (40 oz) tissues bar soap

Needed Food Donations:

bags of onions fresh garlic black tea bags spices, cake mix frosting surplus veggies from your garden!

We are especially thankful for any **fresh produce** people are able to donate. This past week we had donations of a few tomatoes, cucumbers and fresh mint. This was a special treat as mint is often used in Middle Eastern cuisine!

We need lots of **reusable shopping bags**! Please send your extras our way!

Books:

We continue to need kids' books...especially preschool books and toddler board books. In the summer we do have some school age kids come through...so books for 1st - 6th graders would be nice too.

Clothes & Household Items:

household items are needed at this point (ie: linens, curtains, blankets, kitchen ware, etc) The Thrift Shoppe is ready to accept fall clothes now and they are in special need of children's items! **(No more spring/summer items at this time, please)**. Please be sure your items are new/gently used & clean.

If you chose to bring your donations to Gethsemane it is best to do this on Thursday mornings from 10-noon. Items can be delivered downstairs.

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.

During summer we often need subs for folks who regularly volunteer at Gethsemane. Would you be interested? If so, please contact Julie Daniel (315-729-8179) or Mardie Ninno (315-558-4555). We need folks doing all sorts of jobs...including working in the food pantry and the Thrift Shoppe.



HISTORY CORNER



Our Memorial Garden

May Memorial's "Memorial Garden" includes all the green space to the west of our building, bordered by E. Genesee Street, DeWitt Road, and Meadow Brook. When the property was purchased in the late 1950s, that area was overgrown with weeds and vines and strewn with excavation and construction debris, and it remained that way for many years.



The Memorial Garden, as we now know it, was the vision of Gerry Lanier, a May Memorial member and forestry professor. In the 1988 report of the building council, Gerry wrote that one of the goals for the 1988-89 church year was to "advance a plan for the development of a memorial garden on the undeveloped area west of the church building." He saw it as an "outdoor extension" of church activities and a place for "both celebrations and remembrances." The concept of a memorial garden was approved by the board and the congregation. Gerry died in 1990, and his bequest helped create the Memorial Garden.

Soon after Gerry's death, volunteers started cleaning the space and clearing away the brush. A seven-member committee was appointed to take responsibility for developing the area into a Memorial Garden and managing it. A professional landscape plan was developed, underground drainage pipes were installed, and perennials were planted.

Many dreams for the Memorial Garden have been realized since 1990. There are stone benches, paths, and places for meditation, as well as space toward the far end of the property on the Genesee Street side for the placement of cremated remains. Two very large meditation stones can be found nearby. A paved pathway connects the sidewalk and driveway in front of the church to the garden below.

Through the years the Memorial Garden has been used for church picnics, outdoor services and celebrations, including weddings, and by RE classes, as well as vendors for "Arts on Genesee," a fine arts and crafts sale held at MMUUS for a few years.

In October of 2019, our Memorial Garden was in the news when an RE group found the burned remains of our Pride flag there. An earlier version of this article was written for the November 2019 newsletter, as we were processing that act of vandalism and violation of our beautiful space.

If you haven't visited the Memorial Garden, we hope you will do so soon. It is a very special place, our own small "nature preserve" that we maintain.

Mary Louise Edwards & Kent Lindstrom

MMUUS History Committee history@mmuus.org.

From the MMUUS history committee

Are you interested in history?
Would you like to learn more about May Memorial's long and
amazing history and help to preserve it?

If so, you might enjoy working with the MMUUS history committee, either as a member or by helping on short-term projects that fit your interests and skills. No special background or expertise is needed! To talk about how you might get involved, email history@mmuus.org or connect with Mary Louise Edwards or Kent Lindstrom during coffee hour.



MMUUS
Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser

Saturday, September 26
5:00-7:00 p.m.

Spaghetti with marinara (vegan or meat sauce)
Salad & Italian bread • Homemade desserts
Gluten-free options available.

Adults...\$10-\$20 Children 5-12...\$5 Under 5...Free

Wine & beer available • Gift basket raffles!

Fall is the perfect time to reunite with friends as the days get cooler and we head into a new season. The MMUUS Spaghetti dinner provides just the right occasion for our MMUUS community to join together for feasting and friendship. Be sure your calendar is free on September 26 for great food, exciting raffle baskets and time to be together at one of our favorite fundraisers.

Contact Linda Wobus, Janet Hiemstra or Alexa Carter if you would like to volunteer.

Homemade cookies are also welcome. See Janet Hiemstra to offer your favorites.



The New Choir Year Begins

The Choir will come together for our first rehearsal Thursday night, September 10th, preparing for our part in the opening Water Communion service on September 13th. We ended in the Spring with a great group, and I'm looking forward to starting the new season with them. Rehearsals are each Thursday, 7:30 pm, in the Sanctuary. We've been blessed with new members in the last few years, and we'd love more! If you are interested in singing with a warm, supportive group of friends, the May Memorial Choir is the place to be! Feel free to contact me if you think this is the year to join. Glenn, at gkimeorganist@gmail.com, or (315) 729-3734



The Folkus
Project of Central New York

Emma's Revolution on Friday, September 18 @ 7:30pm.

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



Spotlight: Art Gallery

Our September artist will be **Justin Moshaty**, a mixed media artist and art educator living in Auburn, New York. Here is how he describes himself and his work - I received my education through the School of Visual Arts in New York City. I've done several large public murals in Syracuse, but have found I enjoy working on small and intimate pieces the most.

The work I've done is like a locket carrying memories of the people closest to me. With collage I connect pen and marker drawings of subjects like Queens and motorcycles with patterned paper and written text. The collage is woven together like an old wall covered in layers of graffiti documenting the passage of time as new layers are added, old pieces fade, and the landscape evolves and changes. New thoughts and drawings overlapping and reacting to the layer underneath. These elements present visual metaphors for how I see relationships with those closest to me. The complexity and beauty inherent in the bonds we share with others – simultaneously powerful, delicate, and ever-changing



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.



Book Group Returns - Bring Your Own Book!

The UU Book Group is back! We will be meeting this year on the second Thursday of every month starting on September 10 from 2 to 4 PM in the parlor at **First UU**. 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.

Any questions please contact Felice Killian-Benigno 315-436-6308
feliksakb@gmail.com



5:30 p.m. Sept. 9
University United Methodist Church
324 University Ave.

Cost: Free
Free Parking Across the Street

Rick Steves on his 56-minute film: *"It's a case study in how fear and angry nationalism can be channeled into evil and how our freedoms and democracies are not indestructible...in fact, they are fragile."*

Sponsor: Interfaith Racial Equity Network of CNY



Greeters/Ushers

It's a new church year at May Memorial! We have combined the Greeters and Usher roles as we do not have enough volunteers to fill both roles.

Please plan on arriving at 10am on Sunday's and check in with the Teri

Hand out any print materials and greeting everyone who comes in!

Taking count of everyone left in the Sanctuary after children leave.

Taking the collection and count the funds after service ends.

As always Thank You for helping out!



Coffee Hour

Coffee hour is very important during the church year!

This task is fairly labor intensive so please plan on arriving around 9:30am and staying until 12:30pm

Make coffee and heat water for tea/cocoa, set out cookies/baked goods

The office supplies basic things: 1/2 & 1/2, cookies.

Folks are welcome to bring special treats.

New this year is we've added sign up for clean up.

As always Thank You for helping out!





Volunteers Needed to Help Maintain our Remembrance Area

Greetings!

As described in the history article in this newsletter, our Memorial Garden encompasses the entire green space to the west (sanctuary end) of our building. In this call for volunteers, we are talking specifically about the section that is designated for the placement of cremated remains, referred to here as the "remembrance area." This section, which is about the size of the raised area at the front of our sanctuary, is located on the Genesee Street side of the memorial garden, not far from Dewitt Road.

When I started helping Bob Burdick prepare spaces/plots for the placement of cremains, he was in his early 90s and I was in my early 60s. Bob had been doing this for many years, as part of what was then the memorial garden committee. I inherited this responsibility from him several years ago and have been working by myself for most of that time. At this point we need two or three younger people (preferably under 75) to help me maintain the remembrance area and prepare 1 to 3 placement spots a year. (The memorial garden is mowed regularly, but the area we are talking about has ground cover and is on a slight rise.)

At this year's spring clean-up day, fallen branches and debris that had accumulated over the winter were cleaned up, and the remembrance area was in good shape for a placement of cremains that took place at the end of May. When I returned to prepare another placement spot in early August, I found that nearly half the area was overgrown with young trees that were 2-3 feet high. A task that I thought would take an hour took nearly three. I later identified the trees as Eastern Redbud, also known as the American Judas tree. Although it has lovely pink blossoms in very early spring, it spreads rapidly once the big heart-shaped leaves come out, and in August it develops hanging seed pods that resemble snow peas. Being a broad-leafed tree, the redbud is now crowding out the ground cover and overwhelming our remembrance area. If one or two able-bodied volunteers could join me in working to maintain the area a few times a year, it would be a huge help.

To find out more, contact me at history@mmuus.org and put "remembrance area" in the subject line.

Thank you for considering this volunteer opportunity!
Kent Lindstrom



Follow up from August 2nd service at May Memorial

Margaret Luttinger of CNY Solidarity has provided answers to some questions that were asked following her talk at May Memorial on August 2nd, "Club America: Promoting Civics or Christian Nationalism." If you are interested in learning more, please follow this link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1N2W2yhesmSSqn5R5UpOfJE1IBv9HHKEW/view>

Jeffrey M. Davis - third great grandson of Rev. Samuel May

Sunday October 4th at noon in the Sanctuary

What would you do if the law demanded you betray your neighbor?

In the 1850s, ordinary citizens faced that very choice under the Fugitive Slave Act. Some complied. Others resisted—risking fines, prison, even their lives—to protect freedom seekers. Join Jeffrey M. Davis—Boston writer and third great-grandson of Rev. Samuel Joseph May—for a gripping multimedia journey through stories of courage and defiance.

From harrowing escapes on the Erie Canal to the dramatic "Jerry Rescue" in Syracuse, you'll meet the bold citizens who refused to bow to injustice.

The lessons of the past echo today.

Discover how communities once stood against oppression—and why their stories still matter.



SHORT BIO

Jeffrey M. Davis is a Boston-based writer and creative director, and the third great-grandson of abolitionist Rev. Samuel Joseph May — a central figure in the 1851 Jerry Rescue in Syracuse, NY.

That ancestral discovery sent him deep into the history of the Underground Railroad, ultimately producing a multimedia presentation and a WGA-registered, award-winning screenplay about Jermain Wesley Loguen, "King of the Underground."



UUIP 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 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.



May Memorial Mum Sale

It's time for our annual **Mum Sale** again folks! You might recall all those beautiful mums we bought and sold last September? And we made over \$1,000 in profit for our church!

Let's all work together to hit \$2,000 this year....are you in?!

Rememberwe should all buy some for ourselves....and sell to others! If you don't want/need flowers, consider buying some to decorate the outside of our church or to give to folks in nursing homes! These will be hardy mums (perennials) in 9" pots.

Buyer's Name (your name):

Colors: Red, Yellow, Orange & Purple

Cost: 1 for \$13; 2 for \$25 ; 3 for \$36; 4 for \$46

	RED	YELLOW	ORANGE	PURPLE
Recipient 1				
Recipient 2				
Recipient 3				
Recipient 4				
Recipient 5				
Recipient 6				
Recipient 7				
Recipient 8				
Recipient 9				
Recipient 10				
Office Use (tally):				

Submit your order to Julie Daniel or Teri by Tuesday, **September 15th**.

You can pick up the flowers on Tuesday, **September 22rd from 10am - 5pm**.

Payment can be completed by check (made out to MMUUS with "mums" on the memo line), cash or QR code to the right

Please Contact Julie Daniel with questions at jdanielyoga@gmail.com or 315-729-8179



Thursday	9/3	Men's Lunch at Munjed's	Noon	
Sunday	9/6	Worship Service	10:30am	First UU
Thursday	9/10	Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Sunday	9/13	Worship Service	10:30am	Sanctuary
Monday	9/14	Twisted Sisters	7pm	Teenz
Tuesday	9/15	Writers Group	10am	Teenz
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	9/17	Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
Friday	9/18	FOLKUS	7:30pm	
	9/18-9/20	Unirondack Community Building Weekend		
Sunday	9/20	Worship Service	10:30am	Sanctuary
		Soul Matters Sharing Circle	12:15pm	Teenz
Tuesday	9/22	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	9/24	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Saturday	9/26	Spaghetti Dinner	5pm	Social Hall
Sunday	9/27	UUIP - Crafting Circle	12:15pm	Teenz
Tuesday	9/29	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall