

Journey Well



UUSARATOGA

May 8 2026

In this newsletter
you can expect:

Upcoming
Sunday Services

What's
Happening in RE

Upcoming
Events and
meetings

Nw Home
updates

Committees and
Teams News
Updates



Dear Congregation,
The Search Team and Board recommend Rev. Viola Abbitt as our Contract to Call Minister. We have agreed to a one year contract that starts in August 1st. This is for a ¾ time position with us.

Rev. Abbitt is a former member of our Congregation and has been a UU ordained, settled minister in Virginia for the past seven years. She is excited about joining us, continuing our healing and provide leadership regarding all the many changes we are going through this year.

Melissa O'Brien will be our Interim Pastor until the end of July and we hope that she will continue to provide periodic thoughtful sermons for us on occasion.

Let's welcome Rev. Abbitt in our best way!

Art for the Board and Search Team

[CLICK HERE FOR THE WELCOME MESSAGE FROM REVEREND V!](#)

THE THEME FOR MAY IS:
AWAKENING CURIOSITY

NEW HOME UPDATE

1. The task force saved about Two Thousand dollars by renegotiating our letter of credit with the ATC/City and converting to a cash escrow account with the City. Saving where we can!
2. We are still pursuing the Wilson Chapel at Skidmore for our Temporary location (6-8months)while the new Home is being built.
3. We received our second \$25k check from the buyer. This is non refundable. The buyer has made application for an architectural review of his proposed townhouses. These are very positive steps towards the closing date at 624 Broadway.

Onward!



This Sunday's Service



Sunday, May 10, 2026

What does it mean to love something into freedom? This Sunday Melissa offers a Mother's Day sermon exploring the central tension of mothering: that genuine love and good parenting requires nurturing another human toward the very independence that takes them away from you.



What's Happening in RE



This month's theme for Religious Exploration is Awakening Curiosity. Not usually a problem for children and youth! It is presented as a bridge to "other worlds"...looking at Life with different perspectives. This week, we explore our UU value of Pluralism, how we "Embrace our differences and commonalities with love, curiosity and respect." Think of Doug Hallberg and his amazing stained glass creations. The variety of shapes and colors are held together by something strong, the leading between them. Pluralism is like stained glass. We don't melt into one color. We stay distinct and we are held together in relationship. We celebrate Mother's Day and say goodbye to Lucy Altman-Coe, our RE assistant as she graduates from Skidmore and moves to her next adventure in Life. Best wishes, Lucy!



Help plan the Landscaping of our New Home!

This is a call for those who are interested in carrying out the landscaping of the grounds of 404 Loudon Road. Studio A has provided some general guidelines, which had to be included in the City's acceptance of our building plans. However, we have lots of choices about trees, pollinator gardens, wildflowers, bird sanctuary, a labyrinth, memorial garden - so many possibilities! There is the possibility of taking some of the landscaping from 624 N Broadway to the new home property. The Task force has its hands full! This is a brand new opportunity to get involved with a project you love! Planning is so important...next step will be implementation next Spring but it's time to get started. Considering how we want the property to show the community who we are is open to us! We need you to make this place beautiful!!

Contact Juliana by email at uusaratoga@gmail.com!



PASTOR'S LETTER

Hello Friends.

Congratulations on the hiring of your next minister. What divine timing, that Rev. Viola is coming back to the area right when you have needed new leadership. I will be staying on through July, helping with any transitions, and then returning once a month (or so) as my schedule allows. I can't imagine disconnecting entirely after all the love we've shared these past months. Thank you for welcoming me, for being open to new ideas and for your willingness to go to places of honesty and healing. It's been an honor.

A couple of things:

Marian Bigelow and I will host an open conversation on end of life on Sunday, June 7, after service.

If you are so inclined, please consider volunteering for the local hospice house, Mary's Haven. My friend, Lissa Mariano, is the Executive Director. Some of you were there when she spoke on Sunday morning a few weeks ago. Here is the link to the volunteer application and Lissa's contact info:

<https://forms.office.com/r/Zx8Nm1ctzh>

Lissa Mariano
35 New Street, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
maryshaven@swwcc.org
MH Landline 518.584.9397 | Fax 518.584.4997

The SAM Project: Spiritual and Meaningful

I have mentioned this a couple of times: my son, Sam, and I are working to develop a new delivery system to get spiritual care to our senior population. Because I have noticed, in my many years of chaplaincy and ministry, that we have gotten very good at extending life while often hollowing out what makes it worth living. SAM is our attempt to address the human need for meaning, connection, identity, and purpose, until the very end of life.

The platform combines human connection with current technology. The idea is largely to take the model of hospital chaplaincy and place most of it online. We have been working on this since January of 2025, with the help of many fabulous people, including Angela Presley at the Dartmouth Magnuson Center, several of my chaplain friends, directors of senior living communities, and people in business development, law, and technology.

The project is now at the point where we need a cohort of users to help us refine its capabilities. This is where YOU come in! If you are interested in knowing more, and potentially being part of the pilot program, join me for a coffee chat after service on May 24, or drop me a line at melissa519@me.com and I'll be happy to answer any questions. It would be a commitment of 2-3 months, trying the various aspects of the platform and giving us feedback. Sam and I and our wonderful band of humans trying to improve the quality of life for everyone in our senior years, will be deeply grateful.

Warmest blessings,
Melissa



FROM REV. LYNN

A MESSAGE FROM REV LYNN ABOUT THE CLUSTER SERVICE

HELLO, DEAR HUDSON MOHAWK CLUSTER NEIGHBORS~

I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR THE MANY CONTRIBUTIONS IN SUPPORT OF SIDE WITH LOVE AT THE CLUSTER SERVICE ON APRIL 19TH. AS OF TODAY THE TOTAL IS \$3,349! (SOMETIMES THERE ARE A FEW MORE DONATIONS THAT TRICKLE IN.) THE FUNDS WILL BE SENT TO SIDE WITH LOVE THIS COMING WEEK, ON BEHALF OF THE HUDSON MOHAWK CLUSTER.
WITH THANKS~
LYNN

If Golden Tempo can do it, so can we!

If you were like the two of us last Saturday at 7PM, you were glued to the TV watching the 152 nd running of the Kentucky Derby. There, amazingly, a 23 to 1 long shot, Golden Tempo, came from dead last at the final turn of the Running of the Roses to best favorite Renegade by a neck to win the race. Golden Tempo's trainer, Cheryl DeVaux, the first female trainer to win the Derby and a native Saratogian, was rendered speechless as she reacted to this stunning victory. Get your tickets now for the Belmont next month, Golden Tempo may soon be in our backyard.

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs knows a thing or two about coming from behind. For some of us who began a campaign to build a new Meeting House more than a decade ago, today looks like we have not only rounded the last turn where we came from dead last to be within spitting distance of winning the challenge and current circumstances make that result a winning bet.

Eight or nine years ago I had a conversation with Barbara Kass, our recently deceased but fondly remembered long-time member of our Congregation. With deep feeling Barbara declared her belief that the future of our Congregation depended on the critical need for a new building, but she was fearful that would not happen because of a lack of resources. How things have changed.

Consider that at this moment we have secured a building lot, prepared it for construction, and paid for it. We held a vote of the Congregation to move forward with the construction of the New Meeting House and secured approximately one million dollars in solemn pledges for that purpose. We have signed a contract for the sale of 624 N. Broadway and there is every indication it will successfully close in mid-summer. We have a pending contract for the erection of a magnificent structure more than doubling the size of our existing space in a strikingly beautiful building that embraces and utilizes the gentle contours of the lot it will be built upon. We are close to signing a contract with a builder who has been helpful in the design phase of our building. The construction cost is about 2.5 million dollars. Because of additional money raised beyond that collected so far from pledges, and because of proceeds from the expected sale of 624 N. Broadway, we "are within spitting distance" of having the proceeds needed to pay for the new building which we could then occupy without a mortgage. A vitally important consideration in achieving that result however, is that all outstanding pledges be paid.

After last Sunday's service, Arthur Holmberg informed us that Viola Abbitt has agreed to become our next UU Contract Minister with the possibility at the proper time of becoming our Settled Minister. She joins us officially in August. A number of us know "V" since she previously was a member of our congregation during Linda Hobby's tenure as our minister. I have followed V's career and Beverly and I have participated in services she has led in Virginia Beach and in Glens Falls. We have the highest expectations that V will provide the leadership needed as we transition to a new building. Our congregation has also benefited immensely from the caring and wise ministrations of Melissa O'Brien. Melissa helped us recover spiritually and emotionally from several setbacks and we expect that she will continue to serve us full time in the near term and possibly part time into the future. So, We Can Do It, yes we can! Pay up those pledges, immerse yourselves in the work of our changing congregation; if you distanced yourself from your congregation recently, please come back and help us become the spiritual presence in our community that will model kindness, decency, love, and respect for all people.

Eric Lawson



Dear Community Member,

Significant changes to Saratoga Springs' Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) are being proposed and will be voted on by the City Council in just a few weeks. Because of the speed and scope of these changes, now is the critical moment for residents to learn what's being proposed and to make their voices heard.

The UDO is the governing document for how our city is planned. It regulates zoning, land use, design standards, and how development occurs across Saratoga Springs. As currently written, the proposed revisions would eliminate long-standing protections, including the architectural district and mechanisms that help prevent the demolition of historic buildings. These changes would significantly affect the look, character, and future of our city.

Concerned residents and land-use professionals are organizing a Community Conversation to educate the public, answer questions, and provide an opportunity to directly share feedback with the Mayor, who has confirmed he will attend. This meeting is especially important because the City is not offering any public workshops, and the review process is moving extremely quickly.

This may be the only opportunity for residents to ask questions and express concerns before a vote is taken.

Community Conversation on Proposed Zoning & UDO Changes

📍 Saratoga Springs Public Library
Monday, May 11 | 6:30–7:30 pm | Glasby Room

If thoughtful planning, historic preservation, and public participation are important to you, please make every effort to attend.

Questions or comments?
Call or text Patty: 518-859-7347

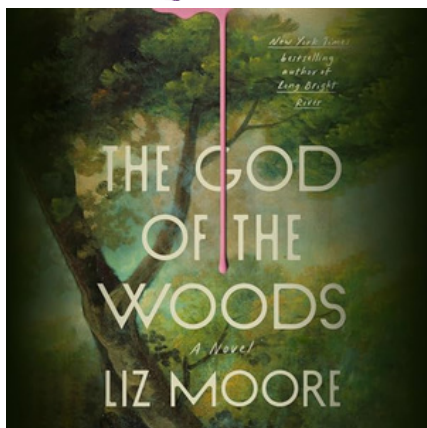




Wayside Pulpit

The Wayside Pulpit provides messages of inspiration for those who pass by our door. These quotations are chosen biweekly from the collective wisdom of the ages to reflect the diverse and life-affirming beliefs of our congregation.

[Click here for the archive](#)



BOOK GROUP

May's selection is *God of The Woods* by Liz Moore. The next meeting is on Monday May 18, 2026 at 6pm. All book lovers are welcome. For information, please contact Barbara Egerman at begerman3@gmail.com, or Carolyn Lansberry at carlan55@gmail.com.



Event News

[Click here for the Events Calendar](#)

May 10, 2026 Sunday
10amWorship Service (In-Person & Online)

May 13, 2026 Wednesday
6:30pmBoard of Trustees meeting

May 17, 2026 Sunday
10amWorship Service with RE (In-Person & Online)



ABOUT UU

On Wednesday, June 3 at 6:00 to 8:00 PM, the Membership/Hospitality Team will offer the class "Learning about Unitarian Universalism and UUCSS (LAUU)." The one night session will be led by Faye Mihuta, Barbara Floeser, and Dianne Kiernan.

Attendees will meet others new to the congregation while we define Unitarian Universalism and explore its long and rich history, as well as learn about the founding of UUCSS. We will talk about our collective values and beliefs and have the opportunity to discuss those with one another. Leaders will also share what it means to become a member of this congregation and the many ways in which people can engage in congregational life at UUCSS.

As a way to prepare for this class, those who sign up will receive a link to three short videos about Unitarian Universalism that total about 30 minutes of viewing time. There will be a sign up sheet at the rear of the sanctuary. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Floeser--bfloeseraka@gmail.com. Thank you for considering joining us on June 3 for some thoughtful reflections.....and refreshments!

Let'sTalk

UU Monday Night Film Forum

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Glens Falls has been bringing community together by way of film in thoughtful, non-judgmental forums.

This month we bring you the shortfilm **"A Lien"** about something happening in our region that invites people into action, changing the series theme to:

Let's Talk, Let's Act

Date&Time: Monday, May 18, 2026 6:30 PM

Film: **"A Lien"** is a powerful film about a family attending a required immigration appointment to adjust the father's green card status. The film has built a reputation through its urgent political relevance and emotional authenticity, winning an Academy Award for best live action short film. The film centers on a family whose stability is shattered not by wrong-doing, but by Federal policies that criminalize their existence. When immigrant wage earners are detained or deported, their families, often our neighbors, can be left bereft. Preparedness can be key.

PostFilm: This short film hits hard and calls for action. Your questions about what we can do will be welcomed by local immigration advocates moderating a follow-up discussion. There are local support groups and networks to learn about, volunteer opportunities, and advocacy actions. We are getting prepared.

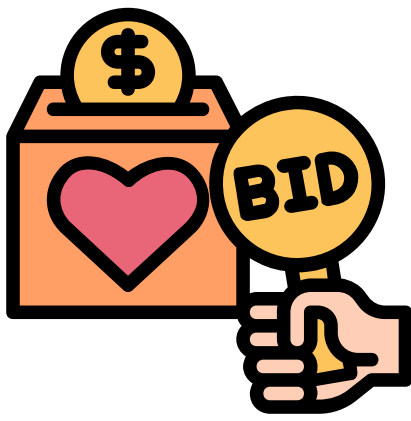
Please join us.

Location: UU Congregation of Glens Falls – 21 Weeks Road
(next to Walmart on Route 9 in Queensbury, NY)

Contact: (518) 792-2811

Films are free to the public.

[CLICK HERE FOR A TRAILER OF "A LIEN"](#)



FUNDRAISING TEAM NEWS

Our next fundraiser will be our annual auction which will be held on Saturday June 13 from 6-8:30pm.

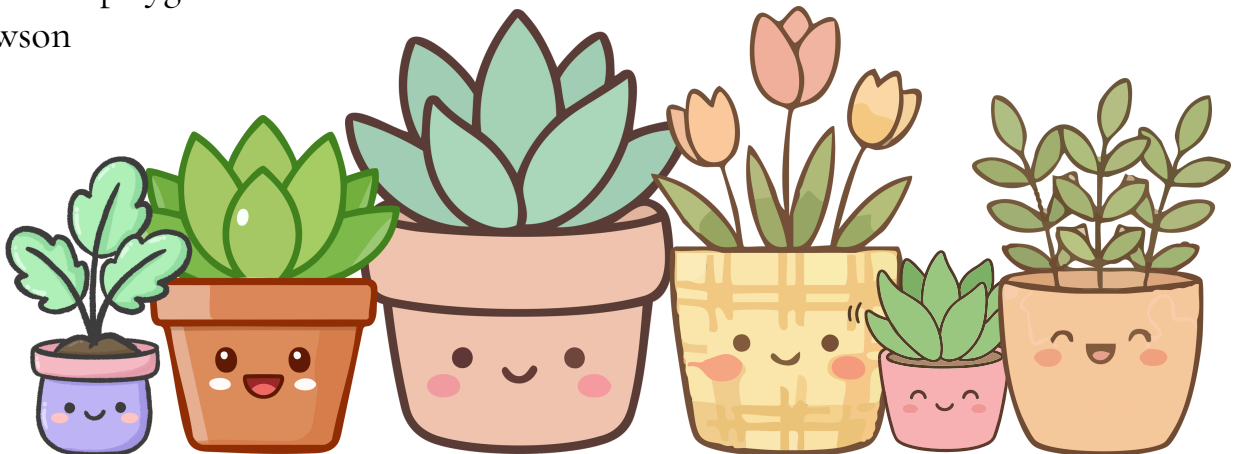
This auction is for our congregation and close friends only since many of the auctioned off items/events involve the use of our private homes. We are now looking for donations for the auction. Donations can be items or events. For example, in the past such EVENTS as boat rides, hikes, birdwatching, backyard BBQs, dinners, visits to camps, corn hole in the backyard, taking people to the airport among others have been auctioned off. ITEMS are limitless with home made pies and cakes, furniture, fire wood, house concert, etc.

We usually have 10 items in a silent auction that runs concurrently with the active auction. There are forms in the back of the sanctuary to fill out for each item to be included in the auction. If you have decided on an item, please fill out a form and give it to Kerry this Sunday. We need to have all forms by the end of May.

Perennial Sale

For many years the church has held a vegetable, herbs and perennial flowers sale at the church in May. The highlight was always Murray's tomatoes. A couple years ago we discontinued the tradition since most of those growing plants, dividing perennials and helping with the sale were in their 70s and 80s and growing tired of the intense labor for this event. But last Sunday a conversation in the back of the church about what to do with our divided perennials led to a plan to have a small perennial flower sale on Lawson's front lawn late in May---date to be determined. If you are interested and have perennial, please divide and pot them as soon as you can so they can rejuvenate and look perky by sale time. Julie and Kerry will bring pots to the church on Sunday. If you need pots, help yourself. They are in the fenced in playground area.

Bev Lawson





Social Justice Team

Please check our UUSaratoga website for more info.

Check out the latest notes including events on our website. There's LOTS happening in our community!

At 7PM on May 26 at the UU Saratoga Church the League is hosting a workshop for the community to better understand the DDDA. Please share and join us.

<https://www.lwvsaratoga.org/events/2026/4/30/dddaworkshop>

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

Thursday, May 21st
4:30 pm PST / 5:30 pm MST / 6:30 pm CST / 7:30 m EST

THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO ALL GENDERS, AND WE WELCOME MEMBERS, ALLIES, AND FRIENDS ALIKE

JOIN US ON MAY 21ST

UUWF is changing the narrative and talking about all the ways we mother and hold space for what's important in our lives. Whether it's children, community building, local actions, or movement spaces, our labor changes all that we touch.

Join us on May 21st to uplift two movement workers, the Rev. Denise Graves and the Rev. Ranwa Hammamy, as we talk about what it means to mother the movement across all aspects of our lives.

We celebrate the transformative power of mothering, and invite you to join us in mothering the movement for collective liberation.



Give Away The Plate-for May: Rebuilding Together Saratoga County

They provide home repair services for low income homeowners in our community. Services are provided by volunteers and local contractors to older adults, individuals living with disabilities, active and retired members of the armed services and families with children.

Please remember that the first plate collection of the month is donated. Any other donations to the monthly GATP should be designated as such.

Recent Sermons



Did you miss a service? Or was there a sermon you particularly liked? Click here for them.





More Info About UUSaratoga

Joys & Sorrows

If you have a personal joy or sorrow in your personal life that you would like to make known to your fellow congregants, we encourage you to click on the link below to email the Care Team in a sentence or two what you would like us to read aloud during our Sunday worship. (Late entries may have to be included in the following week.) To share a Joy or Sorrow, please email the Care Team at careteam@uusaratoga.org.

Message from the Membership & Hospitality Team

In an effort to make visitors to UUSaratoga feel more welcome, the Membership & Hospitality Team asks everyone to be aware of newcomers and people you may not know who are sitting near you on Sunday morning or standing alone at coffee hour. Greet them warmly. Ask if they have any questions, thank them for coming, and tell them you hope to see them again.

Welcoming is a spiritual practice and a way of sharing the message of our UU faith.

To become a member of the Congregation

If you would like to sign the book and become a member, please let Audrey Belt (beltaudrey@gmail.com) know and she will bring the Membership Book to a UU service for you to sign. Qualifications for membership per the UUCSS Bylaws: Anyone 18 years and older can sign the book. Signing the book indicates that you subscribe to the purposes of the Congregation and agree to participate in and support the Congregation's programs and activities, and to support the Congregation with an annual recorded financial contribution.

Have an announcement?

Email, text or call Juliana at the office (uusaratoga@gmail.com 518-584-1555) for information to be shared at the beginning of Sunday service. The deadline for receiving your info is NOON THURSDAYS.

TO SIGN UP FOR *JOURNEY WELL*, OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER, PLEASE USE THE FORM ON THE HOME PAGE OF OUR WEBSITE (lower right)

TO ATTEND SUNDAY SERVICES ONLINE, [CLICK HERE](#)



SHARE ME!!!

<https://gofund.me/15b1f07ad>



All it takes is a couple of clicks to send our Go Fund Me Link to everyone you know! The more it's shared the more donations we'll have toward our new home. Copy and paste the link in an email or text and share, share, share. Encourage those you send it to to also share it with everyone they know.

UPDATE: \$3,995 of the initial \$8,000 is already in our bank accounts! TWENTY ONE donations, as little as \$25 and as high as \$1000!

SUNDAY



UU Saratoga is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Sunday Worship Service
Time: 10:00am
Every week on Sun

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91704074305?pwd=7z4cyYIVOU3JfPLRS2gCoP1o0Tzqc8.1>

Meeting ID: 917 0407 4305

Passcode: 466653

One tap mobile

+16469313860,,91704074305# US

+16465588656,,91704074305# US (New York)

Join instructions

<https://zoom.us/join/91704074305/invitations?signature=h3xW8E9j3MqYWaCbgOYu-Pncax8SM3Up54Bkp1pvIVU> (copy and paste into your browser)

OFFICE HOURS Tues-Fri 9am-3pm May close early Fridays	518-584-1555 uusaratoga.org
Meetinghouse 624 N. Broadway, Saratoga Springs NY 12866	Mailing Address PO Box 26, Schuylerville NY 12871