

FEBRUARY 2025

THE BEACON



Newsletter of Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton

February Sunday Services

ALL SERVICES BEGIN AT 10:30AM

February 2

“Who Is Not Welcome?” Taylor and Cooke

This month's theme is 'Inclusion,' and this is exciting because Inclusion is a central theme of Unitarian Universalism all the time! But every group must have some limits, right? What are our limits?

February 9

“Spiritually Queer” Douglas Taylor

Most of us do not fit in the boxes society provides for us. The LGBTQ+ community has shown people of faith a path toward ‘coming out’ as our authentic selves. Every faith community can learn to be more accepting, more honest, more affirming and authentic.

February 16

“Tennis, Rocks and Strawberries” Rev. Art Suggs

The sermon is an interplay of three elements. It consists of a modern sports story, an ancient Hebrew text involving the patriarch Moses, and an equally ancient Zen parable. I hope, by bringing these elements together, to offer a bit of guidance for living our lives in these times with grace and optimism.

February 23

“The Substance of Things Hoped For” Rev. Douglas Taylor

Faith is a tricky topic among Unitarian Universalists. But let us consider our way into the topic, consider it through the lens of trust. We can focus on believing in God if you want; and we can also focus on believing in Justice, Goodness, and Love.

STAFF:

Minister: Reverend Douglas Taylor
Board President: Kate Thorpe
Director of Family Ministry: Dylan Cooke
Music Director: Vicky Gordon
Office Administrator and Membership Coordinator: Karen Manzer

HOURS:

Office Hours: 9:00am to 1:00pm M-F closed on Wednesday

Worship Services: Sundays at 10:30am

Children and Youth Programs: Sundays at 10:30am
Nursery Care during services

HOW TO CONTACT US:

183 Riverside Drive
Binghamton, NY 13905
Phone: 607.729.1641
Email: office@uubinghamton.org
www.uubinghamton.org

Beacon Newsletter
Deadline: Noon on the last Friday of each month.



Adult Choir is Seeking New Members

There is nothing more uplifting than being part of a vocal community, and the choir's contribution is a vital part of our Sunday worship together.

We are a welcoming group of enthusiastic and welcoming people who join in our love of music and desire to express ourselves through song. We embrace a variety of musical styles (e.g. spirituals, show music, classical, folk), and encompass a range of musical backgrounds. You need not have a "trained" voice to participate. The ability to sight-read is also not required.

Rehearsals are weekly from 6:30 – 8 on Thursday evenings in the sanctuary.

The choir typically sings twice a month. However, there is great flexibility. If you are only able to join us for one song or a few months, that is fine. You needn't feel that you have to make a long-term commitment (although that would please me!).

If you have any questions or just want to know more about the choir, please call or text me at 607-222-5836 or e-mail me at vgordon2763@gmail.com.

First Sundays at UUCB

On the first Sunday of each month, our multi-generational worship service offers innovation in the Sunday Service experience. Designed to increase opportunities for connection and explore many different ways to tap into our intellectual, creative and spiritual depths, we gather for a shorter service in the Sanctuary and then spread out for different workshops. The hardest part is often deciding which experience to choose!

1st Sunday Workshops for February 2nd

"How Can We Help Strengthen Our Democracy?" with Wes Ernsberger in the Chapel. I think most people would agree that our country's democracy, never perfect, is now getting weaker. What can we do to make it work better? As it turns out, there are lots of ways. Wes Ernsberger will facilitate a discussion on this topic. Come join us!

"Faith in Action: Valentine's Day Cards for Seniors" with Pat Chirumbolo and Karen Manzer in the Social Hall. Let's support Senator Lea Webb's initiative, as she invites community members to create hand-made Valentine's Day cards for nursing home and adult care residents in the Southern Tier. Senator Webb's office will distribute the cards before the holiday. All ages are welcome to help spread joy to seniors across the district.

"Let Your Creative Spirit Shine!" with Ann Rose in the Social Hall. Fill your night with stars! Recycle paper bags into fun and beautiful 3-dimensional stars, then decorate with paint and glitter – anything to make them shine. Craft involves gluing, cutting, and painting. Younger crafters may need help with cutting.



Congratulations UUCB!

With lightening speed and sheer determination, you rose to the challenge of ending our mortgage and to date \$246,626 has been pledged and \$182,537.88 has come in and already been paid to Visions. That means our current debt is somewhere around \$50,000! Each month we pay our regular payment as budgeted plus any additional money that come in from our BTM pledges. We will burn this mortgage and hopefully before the end of this church year!

Here are a few points I would like you to consider:

1. Douglas's goal for this drive was for 100% participation so that we can all own this accomplishment. Obviously, it does not matter how much you contribute, but know it is not too late to be a part of it. Pledge cards are in the office or you can put your part in an envelope marked Burn the Mortgage with your name and put it in the safe in the office.
2. Do NOT think that it is less important now that you fulfill your pledge. Shrinkage from pledge to what is actually gathered is a reality in every pledge drive, but please do your best to complete your pledge. Let us not undermine our efforts here.
3. SO, what if we do really end up realizing more in this drive than is needed for the Visions loan? Several ideas have circulated including paying down the \$100,000 loan from Endowment or funding our Capital Improvements line once again against to prepare for inevitable needed repair and upgrades. However, the Board feels strongly that IF an excess of funds is created through your efforts and from your pocket, you the congregation will need to have a say in how those funds are used, much like how we decided how to allocate a surplus in our budget at the end of last year at our annual meeting.
4. Finally, I would like to invite you all to attend the Board's town hall meetings to keep informed. Our next Town Hall meeting will be February 9th after the service. Thank you and congratulations to us all.

Kate Thorpe, Board President



UUCB Family Ministry



At UUCB, we offer progressive programming for children and youth of all ages,

Nursery care is offered every Sunday morning unless specified otherwise. Our youngest kiddos can expect structured and unstructured time with our qualified staff.

Elementary and Middle School classes use the Soul Matters Curriculum. Children will get to explore their curiosity with a dive into our newly voted in values and how that interacts with our greater communities as we live out our mission. There will be stories, experience-based learning activities, song ideas, mindfulness practices, body practices, games, crafts, skits, videos, and more.

Youth Group meets about once a month, but times and days vary. Please contact Christine McWhirter at ccmcwhirter@gmail.com to find out when the next gathering will be.

For more information about our children and youth programs, contact Dylan Cooke at dfm@uubinghamton.org



2nd Saturday Suppers

UUCB hosts a delicious and nutritious home cooked meal for a very affordable price on the second Saturday of each month. Thank you to Nancy Knipscher and Lisa Sienkiewicz for cooking these meal as a fundraiser for UUCB.

Format/prices will remain the same- \$6 main dish, \$3 side dish, \$3 dessert. Folks are encouraged to eat in or bring own containers for take out. Cash is preferred.

Saturday, February 8 will be shepherd's pie, vegetable and dessert.

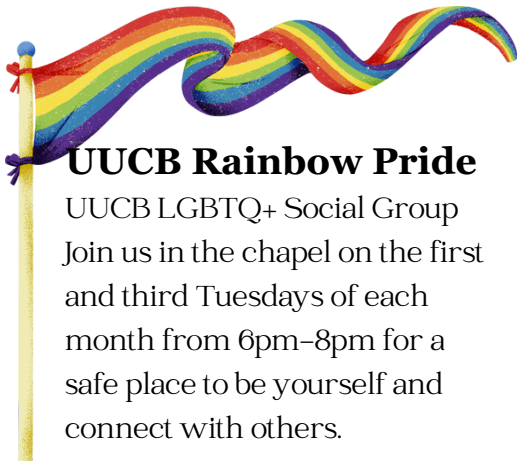
This will continue to be a general fund fundraiser.



GUEST MINISTER FEB. 16 ART SUGGS

Art Suggs is a retired minister who resides in Binghamton with his wife, Tracy. He has been a minister for 38 years. For the last 11 years before retirement, he was pastor at First Congregational Church of Binghamton. He has had a lifelong commitment to interfaith dialogue as well as dialogue between Science and Religion.

Our full calendar of events is at uubinghamton.org



UUCB Rainbow Pride

UUCB LGBTQ+ Social Group
Join us in the chapel on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 6pm-8pm for a safe place to be yourself and connect with others.

Cranberry Coffeehouse

Saturday, February 22 at 7pm

Don Sparks

Sparks' songs take you on an eclectic lyrical and vocal journey, with well-crafted novelty tunes, upbeat rockers, and tender ballads that may remind you of some of the best, from Gordon Lightfoot to David Gates and from Arlo Guthrie to Kenny Rankin."

Performer web page:

donsparks.bandcamp.com

The Cranberry Coffeehouse is the longest continuously-running showplace for traditional folk and acoustic music in New York's Southern Tier. We present a wide variety of American music, as well as folk and traditional music from around the world. *The concerts have been hosted at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton church for over 30 years.*



HOW TO HELP WITH THE HOUSING CRISIS

We had a successful forum on Saturday, January 26 where we took action on how UUCB will respond to our current local housing crisis.

The HUUB wants to thank everyone who showed up and signed up for Social Action teams in order to address our local housing crisis! We have created two teams that people can sign up to be on:

Team #1: Our Systemic Housing Crisis

Team: This team will be working with local organizations to help with the legal and economical challenges of the housing crisis which includes challenges with our police, government officials, and an overall lack of housing. In this group they are working to raise funds for local organizations who are working to address the lack of housing, while also working to address legal/zoning problems, and do grant writing. If you are interested in helping this team email Emily Hotchkiss at hotchkiss.emily@gmail.com

Team #2: Our Houseless Outreach Team:

This team will work to continue to collect donations needed for our houseless community. They will also work to collect bikes and bus passes. One issue they will be working on trying to solve is houseless people's need for P.O. Boxes. This group is still working on deciding who their team coordinator will be so until then, you can email the HUUB at huub@uubinghamton.org if you are interested in joining this team.



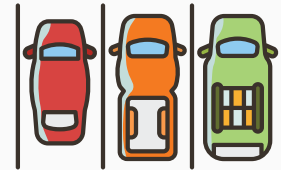
Last Sunday Lunch - February 23

On the last Sunday of every month, we have a themed potluch lunch after the service.

Join us for a chili cook-off on Sunday, February 23 after the service.

If you would like to enter your chili, please bring it to the social hall before the service that morning and complete and entry form.

If you are not bringing chili, you can bring something to go with chili - crackers, cheese, veggies, cornbread, etc.



PARKING ISSUES AT UUCB

As you know, we have had large numbers of people attending services on Sundays, which is wonderful!

We have also had some folks who need closer parking spots say they haven't found any on Sundays.

If you do not have physical limitations, please park in the back parking lot, or, better yet, park in the Lourdes parking lot. We have their permission to park there on Sundays.

Let's try and save the "good" parking spots for folks who need them and our Sunday visitors.

Taking Action!

"Here at UUCB, social action is the congregation's work!

The Social Action HUUB exists to support the creation and maintenance of social action teams.

You can either brainstorm an idea for a social action project and then fill out an application on the HUUB bulletin board or sign up to be on someone else's team. The teams are listed on the bulletin board. If you have any requests, thoughts, or questions, please get in touch with the HUUB at huub@uubinghamton.org.

Please do not offer ideas or request things from HUUB members individually. Please email the whole HUUB. "

Building Bridges Periodical

Do you want updates on what is happening in our greater community? Do you like sharing your thoughts and opinions on social justice? Do you enjoy reading other people's thoughts and opinions about social justice?

The Social Action HUUB publishes a monthly periodical called **Building Bridges Periodical**. To subscribe and get the Submission Guidelines, email buildingbridgesmonthly@uubinghamton.org

Ongoing Events

UUCB Community Drum Circle

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12 6:30PM

Create a sense of community by joining in our all ages drum circle. The drum circle offers equality because there is no head or tail. It includes people of all ages. The main objective is to share rhythm and get in tune with each other and themselves. Bring your own drum or borrow one of ours. Contact Jenne Micale at Jennemicale@gmail.com for more information.

Beginner Yoga

MONDAYS 5PM

Yoga instructor Irena Trubnikov leads us in a yoga class each Monday. All are welcome. Bring a mat or towel, a water bottle and wear loose comfortable clothing.



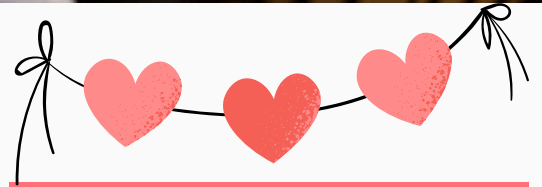
Role-Playing Tabletop Games

SATURDAYS 4-7PM

Join us for exciting and fun role-playing games (similar to Dungeons and Dragons) for ages 12 and up with Dungeon Master Peter Steketee. We meet in the classroom at the end of the hallway.

You can find our complete calendar of events at <https://74087865.view-events.com>

If you have an event to add to the calendar, contact Karen Manzer at 607-729-1641 or office@uubinghamton.org



UU Pagans

UU Pagans is an organization dedicated to networking Pagan-identified Unitarian Universalists (UUs), educating people about Paganism, promoting interfaith dialogue, developing Pagan liturgies and theologies.

Meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at UUCB from 6-8pm

Depression Support Group

Mondays at 6pm
Anyone who is affected by depression is welcome to join us.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Toni Rorapaugh 12th
Aurora Song 17th
Monika Fridrich 21st
Fiona Greenstrom 27th
Sophia Greenstrom 27th

WELCOME

Family and Friends Sunday “Come in from the Cold”

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Bring a friend or Family member that you would like to share UUCB with, We will have special events that day including a scavenger hunt, chili cook-off and outdoor snow fun!

We are looking for friendly greeters for that day, and if you have an idea of how you can help make this a special day, let karen manzer know at office@uubinghamton.org

Get Connected



Easy Ways to Get Involved at UUCB

Help the outreach committee do their job! Share info about UUCB and our events on Facebook, in your social circles, and out in the community. Bring a friend to an event or to a UUCB service.

Bring a snack to share for social hour on Sunday.

Social Action: Our Social Action HUUB is looking for your interest and talent! Contact the social action HUUB at huub@uubinghamton.org to be on the UUCB social action mailing list.

Friendly Faces Wanted: We are looking for people who can greet visitors one Sunday per month (even less if we get enough volunteers) from 10-10:30am. Let Karen Manzer know at office@uubinghamton.org if you can help with this

Social Hour Team: Talk to Ron Clupper after service on Sundays or call him at 607-727-8516 if you would like to be a part of the team that hosts social hour on Sunday mornings after the service.

Join the Sunshine Circle: Meet monthly to craft and create cards to send to folks in our UUCB community. Reach out to Traci Pena at gettickledpink2015@gmail.com for more information.

Sunday Morning Welcome Team: Be on hand on Sunday mornings to welcome visitors, show folks where the coffee is, and more. Reach out to Karen Manzer at office@uubinghamton.org to be a part of this team.

Make your own group or event: Do you have an interest that you would like to share with others? Would you like to start up a monthly crafting group, discussion, dance party, movie night? Talk to Douglas Taylor about your idea and how it can get added to the UUCB calendar.

Find out about all that is happening at UUCB! Watch for twice a week emails, check out our Facebook group (UUCB Members and Friends) and our public Facebook page. There is a monthly newsletter, The Beacon, available too. There are printed copies of the newsletter in the wall file outside the office and at the info desk, or you can request that a copy be mailed to you at home by asking Karen in the office. Also, check out our calendar of events by clicking the “News and Events” button on our website.