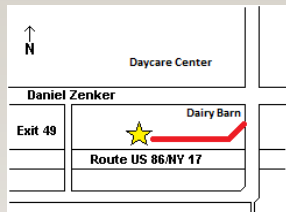


Welcome to the  
Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship of Big Flats.

We are an intentionally  
inclusive congregation,  
welcoming all!

UU of Big Flats, NY  
48 Hibbard Road Extension  
Big Flats, NY 14814  
<http://www.bigflatsuu.org/index.php>



### UUFBF Chairs

President  
*Ron Telford*

Vice President  
*Carolyn Scopelliti*

Secretary  
*Jackie Wilson*

Treasurer  
*Jen Spicer*

Trustees  
*Sonia Vikin*

Programs  
*Jackie Wilson*

Newsletter  
*Chris Telford*

Pianist  
*Anthony DeLuca*



Formal Services are held  
September through mid-June  
**Sunday mornings**  
**10:30-11:30**  
either in-person or via  
Zoom (weather dependent).

Informal Summer Services are  
held July through the beginning  
of September.

No matter what time  
of year...  
Please join us!

# May 2021 Uni-Verse

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Big Flats, NY



## Service Schedule

### May IN-PERSON Services - 10:30am

#### May 2 "20 Amazing Henry David Thoreau Quotes" - w Member Sara Hurley

Member Sara Hurley will present "20 Amazing Henry David Thoreau Quotes to Serve as Life's Lessons." Please bring your thoughts and meanings to transcendentalism and why you think it's still being influenced worldwide from other religions.

#### May 9 "Mother's Day" - w Member Ron Telford

Ron will be talking about his mom, and mothers around the world, and asking that you bring photos and stories about your own special mom.

#### May 16 "Card Carrying Bookstore" - w Owner Dusty Hewitt

This book store on historic Market Street in Corning has organized many of the local community awareness events, and specializes in gender, sexuality and race-related materials in their store. Dusty will be speaking about this work for social justice.

#### May 23 "In Translation" - w Rev. Darcey Laine

Unitarian Universalists are theologically diverse. We are Atheists, Agnostics and Theists, we Humanists and Spiritual Seekers. We honor the wisdom of the world's religions and earth-centered traditions. This means whenever we are talking about what we believe, we are translating. What are the impacts of being a community constantly in translation? And what are the unique gifts such a process offers?

#### May 30 "TBD" - \_\_\_\_\_



### May ONLINE Zoom Worship Services

[Click this link to join Zoom](#)

To attend by phone, dial +1 646 876 9923

Then when prompted type in:

Meeting ID: 943 5698 0987

Passcode: 502412

*All Zooms begin at 10am unless otherwise noted! \*Captioning Available\**

May 2 "Beltaine" - Rev. Darcey Laine

May 9 "What Mother's Really Want" - Rev. Darcey Laine, Reflection by Suchi Raman

May 16 "Full Grown!" - Rev. Darcey Laine

Keep your eye out for emails about May 23 & May 30

## **A Brief History of the Chemung Valley Unitarian Fellowship, now Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Big Flats**

*Written by Long-time Member Leslie Potter*

In the spring of 1955 at the Mark Twain Hotel, several men met to form a Unitarian church in the Elmira-Corning area. In 2016 the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Big Flats celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, meaning that this year,, 2021, we're 65! The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary fell in 1982, not 1980, as you'd expect, and the 40<sup>th</sup> in 1996. Nothing adds up! So when did the Chemung Valley Unitarian Fellowship, as it was first called, come into existence? It doesn't matter; Unitarians can find plenty of other things to argue about.

During the early years, before the current building existed, services were held at the YWCA in Elmira, then the Corning library, followed by the Jewish Community Center, the Federation building in Elmira, a house on old Route 17-E, apparently in the Harris Hill neighborhood of Big Flats, the old Methodist Church in Big Flats, and the Grange Hall in Horseheads.

In late 1962 with a congregation of 64 members in 39 families, the decision was made to build instead of rent. The search for property created the first real rift among the membership. Board president Carl Parmelee strongly favored a site in Horseheads, which angered members from Painted Post, who felt that was too far to drive. Many other locations were considered, discussed, and rejected, ending in the purchase in 1964 of the current property off Hibbard Rd. and I-86. Groundbreaking took place on May 13, 1965.

Interestingly, the first building design was circular, similar to the yurt type considered decades later for an addition. The concrete block structure eventually erected was intended as the first of three buildings. Although the expansion never happened, a small outbuilding was purchased for Religious Education, along with a couple storage sheds.

In 1968 1,000 fast-growing pine trees were planted beside and behind the fellowship building, and pictures of outdoor gatherings in the 1980s show chairs and tables set up under the trees. By now undergrowth has claimed any open areas, although for quite some time we had paths carved and maintained by a member who has since moved. The trees have become a liability, too, responsible for costly damage to the building's electric service when felled by storms. And yet no one wants to see them go!

We've experimented with a children's garden and at various times planted perennials in front of the building--of which only one lily survives. The trumpet vine became a challenge, threatening to take over the whole front of the building, gutters, and roof if allowed to spread. The vine is long-gone, but we still find hopeful shoots every spring.

In 1961 the merger of the Unitarian and Universalist associations meant we were no long a Unitarian-only fellowship. We certainly took our time adapting; the Chemung Valley Unitarian Fellowship officially changed its name to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Big Flats in October 1994. A large sign identifies us to traffic passing on I-86, and the building has changed its hues from a drab grey (or perhaps faded green) to a bright green with fuschia trim. Chris Telford's artistic talents are responsible for a handsome chalice painting on the building's front.

Over the years, UUFBF has enjoyed the services of a number of intern and part-time ministers, perhaps most significantly (aside from current company!) Rev. Evelyn Richter and Janet Ernisse. Janet had started as a member of the congregation and became inspired to attend Colgate-Rochester Divinity School. By the time I arrived in New York in 2005, the fellowship was fully lay-led.

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century years, the fellowship continued a number of beloved practices in worship, including the flower communion, water ceremony, solstice and equinox bonfires, game nights, collecting supplies for 2<sup>nd</sup> Place East (homeless shelter where at one time we furnished and maintained an apartment there), and first-Sunday collections for various causes chosen by the congregation. Less often we've held Passover Seders and lightings of the Menorah at Hanukkah, tried coffee houses, spaghetti carry-out (or eat-in) dinners, and rummage sales, sold poinsettias and UUSC Christmas cards, and won prizes for floats in the Painted Post Colonial Days and Big Flats Community Days parades. We've participated in Corning's Sparkle and Elmira College's Octagon Fair and marched with our Christian, Muslim, and Jewish neighbors in the Abrahamic Walk.

*"We are telling this story now because it reminds us of our rich past and the dedicated people who have sustained and grown the UUF of Big Flats for over 65 years. It inspires us to face the challenges that lie ahead "post pandemic" and work hard to continue our legacy, change with the times and find new ways to be a vibrant community, reach out to those who may not be aware of Unitarian Universalism, a place where we can forward the principles of Unitarian Universalism and provide a safe place for people to explore and live their spiritual beliefs."*

# How Many Christians Does it Take to Change a Light Bulb?

*Written by Anonymous*

**Charismatic:** Only one. Hands already in the air.

**Pentecostals:** Ten. One to change the bulb and nine to pray against the spirit of darkness.

**Presbyterians:** None. Lights will go on and off at predestined times.

**Roman Catholic:** None. Candles only.

**Baptists:** At least 15. One to change the bulb, and three committees to approve the change and decide who brings the potato salad.

**Episcopalians:** Three. One to call the electrician, one to mix the drinks, and one to talk about how much better the old bulb was.

**Mormons:** Five. One man to change the bulb and four wives to tell him how to do it.

**Methodists:** Undetermined. Whether your light is bright, dull or completely out, you are loved. You can be a light bulb, a turnip bulb, or tulip bulb. Church-wide lighting service is planned for Sunday. Bring bulb of your choice and a dish to pass.

**Nazarene:** Six. One woman to replace the bulb while five men review church lighting policy.

**Lutherans:** None. Lutherans don't believe in change.

**Amish:** What's a light bulb?

**Unitarian:** We choose not to make a statement either in favor or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey you have found the light bulbs work for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your light bulb for the next Sunday service, in which we will explore a number of light traditions including incandescent, fluorescent, 3-way, long life, and tinted, all of which are valid and equal paths to luminescence.

## A NOTE FROM YOUR MINISTER - REV. DARCEY LAINE

April 20, 2021

Dear Friends,

I thought it was just me- that everyone else must be pacing by the door ready to get back out into the world. This time last year that's how I felt, but this year I found myself with some surprising feelings.

In the same way that I feel out of shape the first creaky time I get back on my bike each spring, I feel like I am currently out of shape for being with other humans. I've heard many people talking about an increased social anxiety- our social muscles have atrophied a bit, and we are worried we won't remember how to do it, when we finally get together. "I've gone feral" one friend told me- and I realized I felt the same way. I've put most of my energy into my inner life, feelings, hopes, worries, and very little attention to my outer life, although I do try to straighten my backdrop and check my hair before I join a Zoom gathering.



If you are feeling any uncertainty, know that you are not alone. All of us are readjusting, some faster, some slower.

As difficult as this time has been, there are things we may miss, or worry about losing from our long year of Covid. I know that although I miss my friends and family terribly, I have settled into a comfortable routine with my husband and our dog. In fact, a silver lining of working at home is that my older dog has some medical problems, and because I am working from home, I am always close by to make sure he is cared for. Some retired friends who live alone tell me they have settled into the quiet of their Covid household and are surprised to find they will miss it. If there are parts of this past year that have been a comfort or a joy to you, it's good to take some time to honor those things, and to consider what you might like to keep in the coming year. How can you bring the things that have been life-giving into the months ahead?

Friends who are fully vaccinated and trying their old activities tell me that feels odd. Doing what used to be normal doesn't feel quite normal anymore. In fact we might feel sad or angry or unsettled to experience something from the "before times" and notice how the world has changed, how we have changed. Psychologists tell us that even if we ourselves have not had Covid, even if we have not lost loved ones, not personally experienced police violence, this year has been traumatic to our systems. One definition of Trauma is "anything that is too much, too soon, or too fast for our nervous system to handle". Please take this transition at a pace that feels right to you.

As I wait to be fully immunized, and for this next stage of our life together to unfold, I look to the spring flowers for inspiration. My early irises and the crocuses who bravely came up first are done with blooming already. The daffodils take longer, because they have longer to grow, and don't do a well with the unexpected spring snows. My Morning Glories won't even sprout until late June, and it isn't until the full sun of July that it is their turn to grow inches a day, and cover my trellises with heart shaped green leaves and purple flowers. So even though we humans have been waiting to return to "normal" for over a year, it's healthy to have worries and reservations about the coming transition. It might help to remember that really there is no rush. The spring flowers know this. If you watch the tulips, you will see that though they seem to grow inches in a single sunny day, when a late snow or frost comes they will stop their growth just as quickly, and can hover at that same height until the warm sunny days return. The return to normal won't happen overnight, it will grow in fits and starts like the spring foliage. And like a spring garden, each year is like no other. This very strange spring, please be easy with yourself. It's okay to open slowly to the returning sun, and it's okay to burst into blossom. Trust your own inner wisdom, bloom at your own pace.

As always, I am here if you would like to talk through your experiences, your feelings, or just catch up.

Blessings,

*Rev. Darcey Laine*