



## Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills

Whoever you are, Whomever you love, Wherever you are  
in your life's journey, YOU are Welcome Here.

[Visit UU Catskills Website](#)

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# DECEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE MINISTER

The December theme is wonder. I don't know about you, but wonder is one of my very favorite words, one of my very favorite feelings to experience. The holidays – with their lights and trinkets, their warm and inviting darkness, their blessings of visitors, their unexpected snowfalls – are very much associated with wonder in my mind.

And: I write this in the wake of another two mass shootings in America – at a Wal-Mart in Virginia, and at a LGBTQ+ nightclub in Colorado Springs.

I wonder...if it is trivializing to even speak of wonder at a time like this.

And yet wonder is more than just a nice feeling to have at a carol sing. We wonder at the world when we open our hearts to new insight, new learning, to doubt and growth. Violence is the antithesis of wonder. As Ted Lasso puts it, "be curious, not judgmental." When we are curious – when we wonder – we are not in the frame of mind to attempt to dismiss, control, belittle, or destroy, like the pathways of violence.

Life really is wonderful. Be curious, not judgmental. Don't try to grab it like an AR-15 rifle; be open to it like a new puppy. Let us be committed to wonder.

Speaking of wonder, you may be wondering what's happening with staffing and communication here at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Catskills. To keep you up to date on all the changes:

- In September we thanked our Office Administrator, Laurie Nash, after three devoted years of service here. Laurie resigned after a tenure marked by dedication, care, and service.
- During the summer, we employed Amanda Williams as our marketing consultant. Amanda helped us redesign our communications and website, helping to clarify our reach and extend our voice in the community. After Laurie resigned, Amanda agreed to stay on temporarily, in a limited capacity, to produce our newsletters and weekly emails until we found a new Office Administrator.
- We are delighted to announce that Sarah Bissonnette-Adler has accepted our offer to be Office Administrator, on a contract basis. Sarah will be managing our newsletter, office email, rentals, and helping with our website and marketing. Some of you know Sarah, who served as Office Administrator from 2013 to 2019. She also grew up in this congregation. Welcome, Sarah, thank you for taking on this call!
- Submissions for website, newsletter, rentals and so on can still go to the same email: [uuccoffice@gmail.com](mailto:uuccoffice@gmail.com)
- The ministerial search is ongoing. My term as your Developmental Minister ends in June, 2023. I'll miss you! But it's the right time for me to go, and you deserve, and will have, excellent leadership. Different lay leaders, ministers, and staff have answered the call over the years, and that will remain the case in years to come.

Denominational News: There is a major revision of Article 2 being proposed. Article 2 of the Unitarian Universalist Association outlines the “principles and purposes” of our faith and, as such, is foundational to what it means to be part of the UUA. Previously, Article 2 contained the “seven principles” (originally six, they were amended and added to since their adoption in 1961) and six sources. If this change is adopted, it would change to a new document, based on shared values.

I encourage you to take a look at a draft of the document, found here:  
[https://www.uua.org/files/2022-10/article2\\_draft\\_language\\_102022.pdf](https://www.uua.org/files/2022-10/article2_draft_language_102022.pdf)

If approved for review by the UUA Board, Article 2 would be voted on by the entire UUA membership, first in June 2023 and, if approved to go forward, in a final vote in June, 2024.

There will be a chance for individual comment on the latest draft in December or January. I hope to speak more about this proposed change in early 2023. But it’s important you get to read the proposal for yourself, reflect on it, and suggest any changes you feel called to make. Thanks!

Blessings,  
Rev Bob Janis- Dillon

## SUNDAY SERVICE SCHEDULE

JOIN US EVERY SUNDAY AT 10:30AM

December 11 - Gay & Straight Together (In-person, Zoom & RE available)

December 18 - The Wonder of Stillness (No RE & Zoom only)

December 24 - **Christmas Eve\* service at 7pm** (In-person & Zoom)

January 1 - New Year’s Day Meditation (In-person only)

\*There is no service on Christmas day. Enjoy the time with your family and friends.  
For more information please visit the Worship Service page on our website.

Zoom Link

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DECEMBER HALF PLATE RECIPIENT IS  
MY KINGSTON KIDS



[HTTPS://MYKINGSTONKIDS.COM/](https://mykingstonkids.com/)  
USE QR CODE TO COMPLETE YOUR DONATION.

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## FROM UU CATSKILLS PRESIDENT

We are now well into the holidays with all their glitter, wonder and promise. The glitter has already emerged in the festive lights adorning homes and storefronts, while the wonder and promise lie waiting in the shadows.

For me, this season has always been one of bittersweet anticipation—a time in which my high-spirited ideals confront a world-weary reality. Does any song capture this paradox better than Simon and Garfunkel's Silent Night?

Yet, here we are: caught in the midst of this great struggle between our hopes and dreams of peace and joy and a world that all-too-often succumbs to violence and hate. And so, like the classic Native American story, we are caught between two wolves—one of joyful optimism and the other of despairing pessimism. Which will you feed?

For me, the promise of returning light and the wonder of a birth that offered hope to a weary world provide the sustenance to feed my idealistic optimism at least for another year. I wish the same for you. Our world needs those hopes and dreams, and needs you to put them into practice. May you have the Happiest of Holidays whatever tradition you follow!

-Mark S. Howenstien  
UU Catskills President

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# DECEMBER EVENTS

December 7 at 5pm - Writing Group Small Group Ministry  
December 11 at 1pm - Key of Q Concert: the Snow Must Go On!  
December 13 at 5pm - Anti-Racism Task Force  
December 13 at 6pm - Tuesday Night Great Books - Luke  
December 15 at 6pm - Common Read  
December 19 at 5pm - Buddhacats Affinity Group  
December 20 at 5pm - Climate Action Team  
December 22 at 5:30pm - Thirty-plus and RE Family Holiday Party  
December 27 at 7pm - Tuesday Night Great Books - Luke  
December 27 at 7:30pm - UU Catskills Women's Group

## **Recurring Events**

Every Sunday at 7pm - Grief Support Group (Zoom)  
Every Thursday at 7:30pm - Bedtime Story and More! (Zoom)  
First Saturday at 11am - Buddhacats Affinity Group (In-person)  
First Saturday at 7pm - Folk Guild (In-person)  
First Wednesday at 5pm - SGM Writing Group (Zoom)  
First Thursday at 11am - Hangout with Rev. Bob (In-person & Zoom)  
First Thursday at 7pm - Spoken Word (In-person)  
Third Monday at 5pm - Buddhacats Affinity Group (Zoom)  
Third Tuesday at 5pm - Climate Action Team (Zoom)  
Last Tuesday at 7:30pm - Women's Group (Zoom)

[Check Out All Events](#)

KEY OF Q, THE LGBTQ+ AND ALLIED A CAPPELLA  
SINGERS OF THE HUDSON VALLEY, PRESENTS

# THE SNOW MUST GO ON



**SUNDAY  
DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>**

**1:00PM**

UU Catskills 320 Sawkill Road, Kingston

**SATURDAY  
DECEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>**

**7:00PM**

Hudson Valley LGBTQ+ Community Center  
300 Wall Street, Kingston

FOR MORE INFO, VISIT [KEYOFQ.ORG](http://KEYOFQ.ORG)



This is a shared fundraiser between Key of Q and UU Catskills.

All are welcome.

## COMMON READ: MISTAKES & MIRACLES

“Our "common read" this year - both at the congregation and across the UUA - is "Mistakes and Miracles: Congregations on the Road to Multiculturalism". Come explore how UU Catskills is on the road to Multiculturalism, with a discussion of the proposed eighth principle as well. We have held two Common read discussions so far. Whether or not you joined the first two, you are invited to join us for the third / last session of the series on Thursday, Dec 15th 6pm-7:30 pm in the sanctuary with Rev Bob.

## FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Are you interested in the decision-making process at UU Catskills? The Board of Trustee's meeting minutes are available to you on our website at: <https://www.uucatskills.org/board-of-trustees>. The minutes are posted after they are reviewed and approved by the BOT, so there is a one month lag. Members are welcome to attend BOT meetings. The next is on December 15th at 10:00 am in the Sanctuary. Contact Mark Howenstein, [uuccpres@gmail.com](mailto:uuccpres@gmail.com), for more information.

If there is an item you'd like to discuss with the BOT, please contact Mark in advance so the topic can be scheduled on the agenda. Unless asked to speak, members attending on Zoom will be muted, and members attending in person are asked to listen quietly.

## FROM THE TREASURER

### 2022 Tax Deductions

UU Catskills is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. As such, your donations are tax deductible. As we near the end of the year, this is the perfect time to make an additional tax-deductible donation for 2022. Or perhaps you'd like to pay the balance of your 2022-23 pledge at this time. Please submit your payments to the Treasurer by December 21st. This will ensure they are deposited before the end of the calendar year.

## FYI- WHERE DO YOUR PLEDGES & DONATIONS GO?

AAs you already know, your donations are used to support our minister, our staff and our facilities. But more and more frequently, your donations are needed to support the extra and sometimes unexpected expenses of running and maintaining our Buildings and Grounds. This quarter we paid \$2150 to replace the Farmhouse gutters, \$1800 to remove the dead maple tree in front of the Farmhouse, and \$2915 to prepay the Farmhouse oil bill. We are fortunate that we have a tenant in the Farmhouse during the week which offsets some of the expenses, but the cost of unexpected Farmhouse maintenance has continued to exceed income. Also this month our annual fees to the UUA are due, \$8721. We are grateful for the extra donations we received recently, and thankful to all of you for paying your pledges in a timely manner.

## SAVE THE DATE: UU 101

UU 101 will be offered, in person and on Zoom, on Sunday, Jan. 15, at 12:15. At this informal session, presented by Rev. Bob and the Membership Committee, you will learn about UU history, our seven Principles, and UU Catskills governance and activities. This event is geared toward interested visitors and potential members, but all are welcome to attend. An RSVP to [membership@uucatskills.org](mailto:membership@uucatskills.org) is appreciated but not required.

## SOUL MATTERS GROUPS

“Soul Matters” groups are an opportunity to be a part of a monthly group that explores their own lives through deep sharing and connection. If you're interested in joining either group, please contact Rev. Bob at [minister@uucatskills.org](mailto:minister@uucatskills.org) or (845) 853-0063. Thanks!

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## RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



*Last year's collection of warm winter accessories at UU Catskills*

### A Mitten Tree

Throughout the month of December, we ask that everyone (adults and kids!) bring in brand new winter weather accessories such as mittens, gloves, hats and scarves. On Sunday, Dec 11th, the children will decorate a small tree with the donated items which will help ease the financial burden on low-income families in Ulster County.

Dec 11

Religious Exploration in the farmhouse

The Wonder of the Solstice : December's theme is wonder. In this session, we will explore the wonder of the solstice, using elements from science and from the Pagan cycles of the season, marking the turning of the year.

Dec 18

Zoom service only - No R.E.

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## COMMITTEE UPDATES

### ANTI-RACISM TASK FORCE

The ARTF is on hiatus while we take time to dive into our UUCC/UUA Common Read *Mistakes and Miracles* and lean into the idea that ours is a predominately white space with a white culture that needs to change if we are going to live into our faith and our future.

We invite everyone to consider this concept of “whiteness” aka “white supremacy” as described by Muhammad Ali in a 4 and 1/2 minute YouTube piece. <https://youtu.be/7eXdt1eGgCA>

### CLIMATE ACTION TEAM

No CAT meeting in December. While COP27 didn't include a phase out of fossil fuels, there was endorsement by the US, UK, EU and India. Included in the agreement was the creation of a fund to pay for loss and damages to communities affected by the climate crisis. May there be climate progress in 2023.

### FOOD JUSTICE WORKING GROUP

Our Shopper could use 2 more Sponsors, at \$20 each, per month. So she can continue to purchase food to bring to the Community Fridge. The need is even greater because of the rise in food prices. People are running out of their SNAP Benefit before the end of the month. Take perishable food directly to the Community Fridge at 122 Clinton Ave (open 8a-8p) or 97 Broadway (open 24 hours). Thanks so much to those who have been Stewards of the Community Fridges! Contact Karen at [kamiller49@gmail.com](mailto:kamiller49@gmail.com)

## LGBTQIA+

As UUCatskills strives to become more welcoming and inclusive to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, all LGBTQ+ members are invited to an initial conversation to reflect on our efforts as an LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation and give input on how we may help shape our values and practices going forward.

Please join us for a short meeting in the Farmhouse directly after the service on December 11. We will end by 12:45 in order to attend the Key of Q concert, The Snow Must Go On, at 1:00 in the sanctuary. Please contact Joyce White (410-790-1516, rollsadventure@msn.com) or Rev. Bob (minister@uucatskills.org). For more information.

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## COMMUNITY UPDATES

### OPEN DOORS AT HUDSON VALLEY LGBTQ+

All are welcome to come hang out at "Open Doors", at the Hudson Valley LGBTQ+ Community Center on Wall Street, Kingston, Thursday and Saturday afternoons. Rev. Bob plans to be there 4-6:30 pm on Thursday, December 8th - come by and say hi? Bring a dish to share in our queer potluck, or just come and enjoy some company. Come support our GLBTQ+ community, whoever you are and however you identify.  
<https://lgbtqcenter.org/open-doors/>



## FREE HOLISTIC HEALTH CARE CLINIC

Please Join Us! Saturday Dec. 10th 12:00pm - 3:00 pm at The Old Dutch Church 272 Wall St., Kingston for our Free Holistic Health Care Clinic. We Look Forward To Meeting You! Our skilled practitioners will be offering sessions in these modalities: Chiropractic, Cranial Sacral, Massage, Physical Therapy, Reiki and Sufi Spiritual Healing.

Our clinics are always free but donations are gratefully accepted! Health Care is a Human Right | [www.hchrny.org](http://www.hchrny.org) Email: [hchrny@gmail.com](mailto:hchrny@gmail.com). Volunteers Needed! If you are interested, please email [ida@hchrny.org](mailto:ida@hchrny.org)

## YOUR CHANCE TO BE SANTA HOLIDAY GIFTS FOR OUR IMMIGRANT FRIENDS



This holiday season we can help our Ulster Immigrant Defense Network (UIDN) Friends by creating toiletry gift bags for adults. Please purchase three to five personal care items and put them in a festive bag, either for a man or a woman. They can be dropped off at UU Catskills by December 11th. (NOTE: UIDN suggested we help adults since other organizations are focusing on children.) If you're too busy to shop and bag, there's an easy solution—Paula Silbey will shop for you. Just give her cash or use PayPal ([paulacorno@yahoo.com](mailto:paulacorno@yahoo.com)) and she'll make purchases and create colorful holiday gift bags.

## DONATIONS TO CLUB Q SHOOTING VICTIMS AND FAMILY

We know you are wondering what you can do in response to yet another attack on humanity. This link is from the Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center's Newsletter, which provides a number of choices for donations. Please note that some sites have reached/exceeded their fundraising goal, so please give where most needed.

<https://www.denverpost.com/2022/11/20/how-to-help-club-q-shooting-victims-donate/>

## WARMING CENTER - NOW OPEN

Update: The Warming Center/Shelter will remain open on an EVENING SCHEDULE until further notice. The center is operated by Catholic Charities and is located at the 2nda Iglesia La Mision Church, 80 Elmendorf St, Kingston NY 12401. The center can be contacted directly at (845)-481-4549

For reference the hours of operation are as follows:

Evening schedule - 7pm through 9am the following day.

Daytime schedule - 9am through 7pm.





Episcopal Churches  
of Ulster County

## HOLIDAY CONCERT

DECEMBER 11th, 3-5 PM  
St. John's Church, 207 Albany Avenue, Kingston


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FEATURING:

# Rock Academy Showband

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In lieu of admission we will be collecting donations of items such as socks, gloves, hats, and travel size personal hygiene items such as shampoo, conditioner, soap, lotion, deodorant, tampons, pads, tooth paste, bandaids, and Neosporin for the warming shelter.





## Thirty-Plus Group & RE Family's Holiday Party

THURSDAY, DEC 22 FROM 5:30-7:30PM

YOU'RE INVITED TO A POTLUCK AND OPTIONAL SECRET SANTA EXCHANGE  
(FOR ADULTS AND KIDS) \$15 GIFT LIMIT.

RSVP: [ERIN.HILGART@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ERIN.HILGART@GMAIL.COM)

### CARING CONNECTIONS

Dear Members & Friends, We are sharing the very sad news of the death of one of our dear members, Bobbi Katz, after a short illness. Bobbi was a renowned children's poet, a voice for justice throughout her life, a Mom and an all-around wonderful person. She was an integral member of UU Catskills, much loved and will be much missed. Our hearts go out to her daughter, Lori, and all her friends and family. Information on a memorial service is forthcoming.

In better news, Constance Rudd is happy to be home from rehab and reunited with her animals and her husband Doug.

"Paper Dreams" by Bobbi Katz

**Neatly stacked in separate piles**

we wait  
for the shape of a stencil-  
the press of a pencil  
the  
snip snip  
snip  
of silver scissors.  
We wait  
to become  
lacy snowflakes  
fat santas  
pointy Christmas trees...

White, red, green –  
now we are just paper.  
We wait  
quietly on a dark shelf,  
dreaming  
quietly  
dreaming  
of becoming ...

## CONTACT INFORMATION

UCC Minister - Rev. Bob Janis-Dillon [minister@uucatskills.org](mailto:minister@uucatskills.org)  
UCC Office Administrator - Sarah Bissonette-Adler [uuccoffice@gmail.com](mailto:uuccoffice@gmail.com)  
Director of Religious Exploration - Jane Podell [RE@uucatskills.org](mailto:RE@uucatskills.org)  
Music Director - Catherine Cattabiani [geoeliot7@gmail.com](mailto:geoeliot7@gmail.com)

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