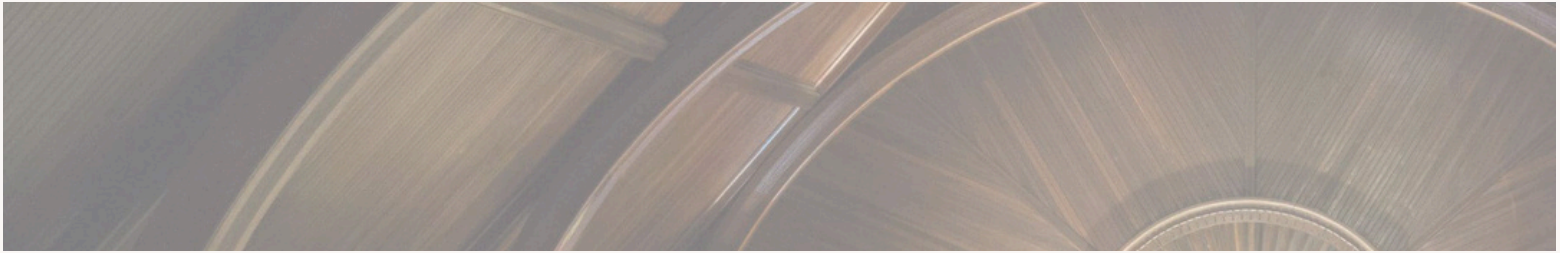




Unitarian  
Universalist  
Church of Rutland

# Rutland UU News & Views

MAY 2026



## President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

This is my last president's letter. I've served two terms and now will hand the gavel over to Ann. It has been an adventurous two years and I have learned a lot about how the church works and I have been in awe of all the work that is done by so many people to keep things functioning. We have an amazing congregation.

I usually try to make my letter upbeat and positive, but feel compelled to bring up a recent subject that has left me feeling sad. I've mentioned that I grew up in Shoreham, and the Shoreham Congregational Church was an important part of my life. Unlike quite a few Unitarian Universalists who had a negative experience with Christianity in their early life mine was very positive. I remember with a chuckle making and painting models of the Nativity in Sunday School. The chuckle is because of the wild colors that the wise men got painted.

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## May-June Half-Plate Partner



**Atowi**

Atowi is a shared community initiative to affirm relationships with the Land and All of Our Relations, raise Native voices, and foster inclusion with understanding, in place. Through collaborations with other local entities, the Project will provide a place-based center to engage with the broader community, while enhancing capacity and creating awareness for future dialogue.

See more at [www.atowi.org](http://www.atowi.org)



## Rutland UU

rutlanduu.org

802-775-0850

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Minister: Rev. Barbara

President: Bruce D.

Vice President: Ann B.

Moderator: Kevin K.

Treasurer: Cathy T.

Secretary: Marcia F.

Trustee: Rosie H.

Trustee: Margaret F.

Clerk: Herb O.

RUU Admin: Jen G.

# Announcements



## Banned Book Club

This group meets on the third Sunday of each month, noon to 1pm. Please sign up by email:

- Becky Eno - bequesting@gmail.com
- Jean Marie Walker- jmwinvt19@gmail.com
- Nancy Weis - nweis@shoreham.net

## May Birthdays

5/11 Peter Mathewson

5/13 Antonin Robbason

5/20 Barbara Threet

5/30 Christopher Archer

## Birthday Cake @ Coffee Hour

May 11



## From Rev. Barbara's Balcony

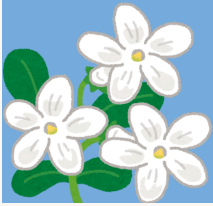
It's a challenging thing, communicating effectively.

A recent UUA-sponsored Zoom event was targeted to "small congregations," defined as those with under 120 members. The break-out group that I attended, with a dozen or so people, included people with congregations of about our size—and also those with an average Sunday attendance of only a dozen or so, and a membership of less than 30, meeting in rented space without any trained leadership. To them, a congregation of 120 seemed almost unimaginably huge! (A UU congregation of 120 probably has at least a ¾-time minister plus a few other part-time staff people.) "Small" is very relative term, obviously—so relative as to be almost useless sometimes. And yet, in comparison to congregations of 500, or 5,000, it's useful indeed. (There are only a few UU congregations with over 1,000 members and none of ours top 2,000).

In a recent conversation about the situation with Iran, one person said she felt "fearful," while another described himself as "terrified" and a third said they felt "deeply concerned." That's quite a range of descriptives, although all three have similar political views. But where does one descriptive morph into another? What's the difference between being "uneasy" and "unsettled" and "frightened," and how do we communicate if/when we each label our emotions slightly differently?

How do we make decisions, as a country or as a congregation, when it's so hard to define our terms? And when we often have such different ideas about what "more spirituality" means, or "more families"? What does it mean for a hymn to be "singable," for example, when we have such a range of musical tastes and skills? What aspects of a story—or a history, or an event, or a question—do we emphasize to one another? Which aspects do we downplay, or overlook, or even intentionally hide? I'd suggest that each of us treats information selectively: I had an agenda for how I wanted my kids to be as adults (thoughtful and discerning, I'd say, which I assumed meant politically liberal and inclusive), and it determined which books I read to them, where we visited, how I explained the world, and how I recounted history to them. Someone with a very different agenda (my cousin, for example, who probably wanted her kids to be thoughtful and discerning too, but to her that meant politically conservative and certain of white superiority) made very different choices about what to expose her kids to, and what lens to use when explaining life.

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## Coming This Month



**May 3, 10:30 am** Rev. Barbara Threet  
“Here. Now.”

**May 10, 10:30 am** Karina Jutzi  
“Women of the Civil War”

**May 17, 10:30 am** Ann Baylock & Jean Marie Walker  
“Courage: Manifestations and Meanings”

**May 24, 10:30 am** Nancy Weis  
“Poetry of Green Growing Things”  
Poem contributions due to Nancy by May 10

**May 31, 10:30 am** Rev. Shirley Oskamp

### Mark Your Calendars

May 3, 12pm - Annual Meeting

May 13, 5:30pm - Singing Resistance training with  
Rutland Indivisible

May 16, 7pm - Songwriters Showcase Concert IV

## President's Letter

Continued from page one ...

When I was in my teens the youth group was very important. Shoreham had lots of cows, but it didn't have a bowling alley or movie theater. A large portion of my social life revolved around youth group activities and we had a very active group. There was one year when the church was without a minister and my friends and I ran our own youth group, a responsibility that we took seriously. When I graduated from Shoreham High School there were 10 in my graduation class. These were mostly the same kids from youth group and almost all of us had been together since first grade. I have known for a while that the Shoreham church was struggling. They were down to a dozen or so feisty souls trying to hang on. But the other day I heard that the church had closed and the building had been given to the town. That news hit me really hard. It felt like a part of myself had been lost. I know I still have all the memories, but it feels like a big hole has been left. I shouldn't have been surprised—St. Genevieve's Catholic church in Shoreham has been closed for long time, and church closings seem to be happening more and more frequently.

I don't want to imply that I think our UU church is in danger of closing. We are doing very well and gaining in membership. But I am concerned about our future if we can't begin to attract some younger families. It would be great if we could get a religious education program going again. Once I am done with presidential duties, I intend to put together a Membership Outreach Committee to explore ways to attract more potential members especially younger folks. If you have ideas on how to reach out to the broader community, I'd like to have you join me on that committee. Please give that some thought.

Blessed Be,  
Bruce D.  
President



## From Rev. Barbara's Balcony

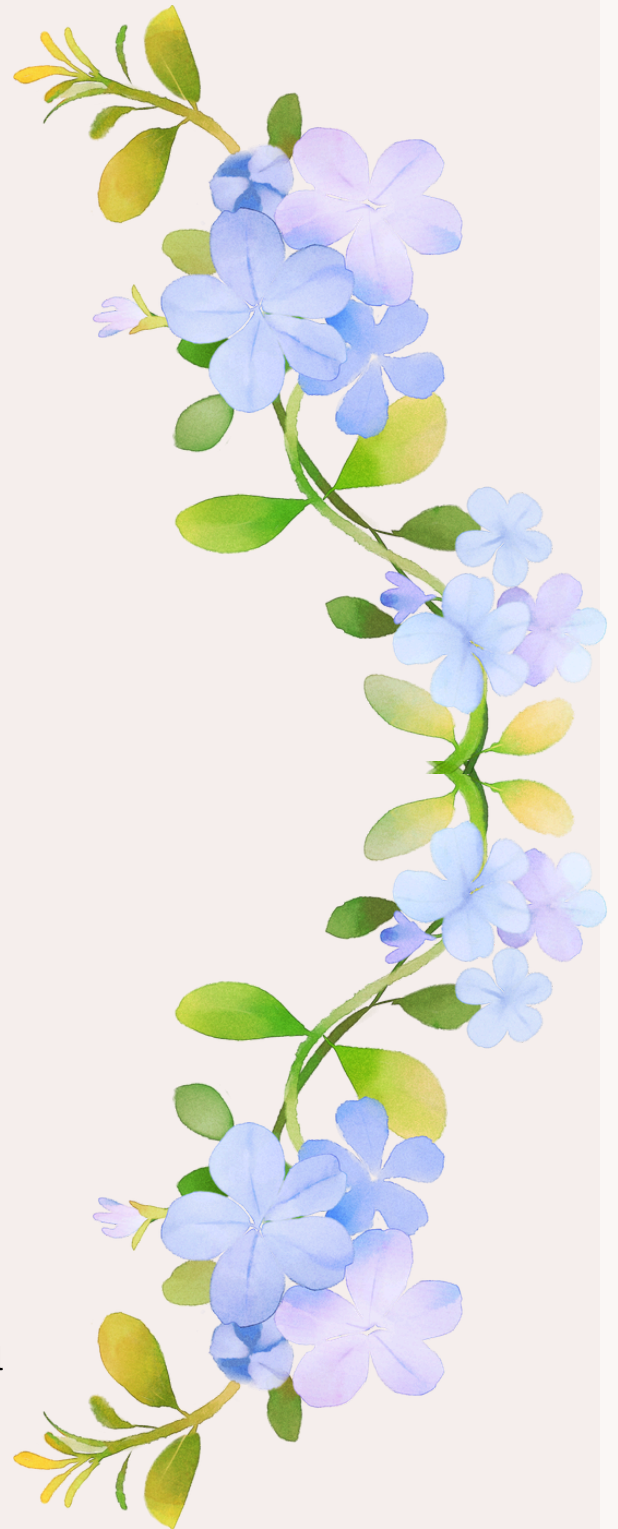
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So, then, what does it mean to be a 'thoughtful and discerning' adult? If you're an educator, or a parent, that's a very important definition!

We are continually trying to define our terms as we try to communicate. We don't use words consistently as a society – I don't even use them consistently as an individual, for that matter. A "cold" day means something quite different in April than it did in January, or than it will mean in July. But if everything's relative, then how do we every explain or interpret anything?

Questions, I think, and more questions. Giving up some measure of certainty, or at least acknowledging there are alternatives and other ways to see the world. Asking what someone else means, especially when their views seem particularly different (when we might learn something new) or when they seem too completely aligned with our own (when we might learn how easily we assume our viewpoint is being confirmed). Being careful about our assumptions and trying not to jump to a reaction before we really understand what's been said. And that takes time and a willingness to keep on learning. After all that's one of the UU Principles that we celebrate: "the free and responsible search for truth and meaning." May we continue searching!

Salaam and Shalom,  
Rev. Barbara



## RUU April Board Meeting Synopsis

- The Board looked at and approved with some changes the template for a new flyer promoting our church. Once the changes are made, it will go to print.
- The Stained Glass Project is nearly completed.
- The Pledge Campaign will take place throughout April so that we can have an accurate budget for the May Annual Meeting.
- Our Service Auction organizers of Kimberly, Erin and Therese Krieger are to be commended for their work in preparing for the auction.
- Our Board President, Bruce, commended the hiring committee (Margaret, Ann, Erin, Bruce and Cathy) for their work interviewing and hiring an excellent new administrator.
- The New Members Sunday will be May 3 and the Annual Meeting will take place after the service.
- Bruce will be assuming the position of Membership Committee Chair after May 3.



## Canvass 2026 Update

We got a bit of a late start on our campaign this year but we hope to end strong!

A very big thank you to all who have pledged so far. We currently have 26 pledges with more than \$40,000 committed for next year's budget.

We encourage anyone who hasn't pledged yet to do so if they are able. It's never too late and we appreciate every gift!