

Newsletter

September 2024

Sunday Service at
10:30am, in person and
online

Zoom Sunday Service Link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89122019151>

Meeting ID: 891 2201 9151

Board and Staff

President, Social Responsibility,
Social Media

[Alexander Herrmann](#)

Treasurer, Personnel

[Carol Moak](#)

Collector

[Francine Germaine](#)

Clerk, Building Use

[Rachel Schwartz](#)

Social Hour

[Ben Foley](#)

Building & Grounds

[Chris Hicks](#)

Membership, Canvass

[Bob Shepherd](#)

Religious Education

[Open](#)

Sunday Services, Fundraising,
Nominating

[Sheila McKenna](#)

Sharing and Caring

[Guinevere Morgan](#)

At-Large

[Peggy Taylor, Gonzalo Bermudez](#)

Caretaker

[Dante Hicks](#)

Pianist

[Karèn Tchougourian](#)

Unitarian Universalist Church of Pittsfield



September Sunday Services

September 1 NO SERVICES

September 8 In-Gathering Service

September 15 Circle Sunday: Sheila McKenna with tales of summer and resilience. Ben Foley and his music teacher with classical guitar.

September 22 Peggy Taylor on Unitarianism

September 29 Alexander Herrmann (theme TBD)

We are looking for the following personnel. Please contact us at office@uupittsfield.org if you are interested:

[Building & Grounds Committee members](#)

[Building Use Committee members](#)

[Social Responsibility Committee members](#)

[Sharing & Caring Committee members](#)

Find us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Website](#)

If you'd like to write for the newsletter, please email the Social Media Director at uucpsocialmedia@gmail.com!

September's Thirty Days

September has always been my favorite month and early fall my favorite part of the year. There's something about the cooler air, the slant of the sun, and the turning leaves that just gets my blood stirring.

And, frankly, cooler weather is going to be very welcome for me personally. I have a health condition that's exacerbated by heat, so my A/C was working overtime to keep me from falling over (but nonetheless, I spent most of this summer pretty sick, due to the heat and other issues). So I'm hoping that it'll be more pleasant for me for the next couple of months at least. My dog prefers it cooler as well (though he likes weather that's actually cold more than I do).

Unfortunately, being ill has taken up quite a lot of my time and attention, which means that I haven't been as active as I was intending to be in the first few months of my second year as President. That said, I still have quite a few ideas to run by the Board and quite a few tasks on my plate, so I will be trying to get to all those before my term is up next June. And of course, between now and the end of 2024, we have a slew of holidays, which are always fun.

The thing I'm most excited about right now is the concert that Bobby Sweet will be giving at the church in October. Please see "**Sunday Services and Church Events**" below for further details. We hope to see you there!

Peace and Joy,
Alexander, UUCP President

News from Berkshire Interfaith Organizing (BIO)

MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITIES ACTION NETWORK (MCAN) EXPANDS TO THE BERKSHIRES TO DEEPEN IMPACT ON ISSUES OF RACIAL EQUITY & ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND WIDEN FOCUS ON HOUSING

(BOSTON) - Massachusetts Communities Action Network (MCAN), a statewide network of faith and values-rooted community organizations with over three decades of experience, is pleased to announce that Berkshire Interfaith Organizing (BIO) is joining the MCAN collective as their eighth and westernmost affiliate. BIO's focus on issues of housing insecurity not only aligns with the work of fellow MCAN affiliates across the state, but comes at a time when holding public officials accountable is deeply needed following the House's passage of a five-year, \$6.5 billion housing bond bill last month.

"Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall." -F. Scott Fitzgerald

"Wine is the divine juice of September." -Voltaire

"MCAN's mission has always been to raise a collective voice centered on racial and economic justice representing the state of Massachusetts. The Berkshires represent a region with growing diversity, a commitment to community, and a desire to offer every resident a chance to thrive," said Janine Carreiro, MCAN Co-Executive Director. "Berkshire Interfaith Organizing is bringing people together to fight for that future. BIO is already powerfully raising their collective voice and sharing their wisdom with other residents from across the state fighting for more accessible housing. "

BIO was founded in 2015 to build an institutional base for congregational organizing across the Berkshires. Its leaders have won major victories over the years in racial and economic justice, including the Trust Policy in Great Barrington in 2017 which created protections for immigrants against profiling and the reinstatement of African-American studies in Pittsfield's high schools in 2019, to name just two.

"The Berkshires are known by many as a vacation destination, a cultural enclave, and a great place for a second house away from the big cities. But for the majority of folks, this is their home - a home they love for its natural beauty and friendly atmosphere, but where they are likely struggling with housing insecurity, transportation issues, poverty, social isolation, or racism," said Sean Manion, Executive Director of BIO. "But there's exciting potential to organize the community around these issues of inequity. Because of smaller governments and a 'DIY' attitude, we can innovate more easily than some other regions where there are greater concentrations of state and corporate power. In that way, we can also serve as an example of what is possible for the rest of the Commonwealth."

This spring BIO powerfully organized in support of mobile home residents fighting to minimize rent hikes and recently helped block a proposed 230% rent increase in West Stockbridge. "Active support for our neighbors facing the oppressive force of rampant social injustice is a driving force for us as community organizers and leaders within BIO," said Margot Page, a Deacon at All Saints Episcopal Church in North Adams. "Through our new relationship with MCAN, we are hopeful that our collective voices for advocacy will be heard and felt across the state with local action working to fuel systemic statewide change, which echoes the victory of the Mill Pond residents in West Stockbridge."

"I'm excited about the collaboration between BIO and MCAN and optimistic that together, we'll explore and make the most of the untapped resources in our area, such as our increasingly-multicultural environment," said BIO Leadership Team member Fernando León. "Cultural events, like BIO's "Jam for Justice" concert this past March, are already spreading our

"All the months are
crude experiments, out
of which the perfect
September is made."
-Virginia Woolf

"It was a lovely
afternoon—such an
afternoon as only
September can produce
when summer has
stolen back for one
more day of dream and
glamour." -L.M.
Montgomery

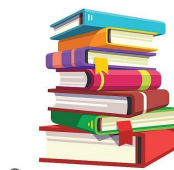
message to a broader and more diverse audience, which in turn, amplifies our collective impact."

BIO's Executive Director Sean Manion joined BIO a year ago after most recently organizing with Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC), a fellow MCAN affiliate. "I hired Sean at BIC, because of his clear analysis of the world, his honesty and his willingness to be vulnerable, all important traits of a community organizer," said William Dickerson II, MCAN Co-Executive Director. "Sean has a fire for justice and a heart for supporting others to step into their power as their own leadership emerges. As an avid researcher, Sean is also good at sniffing out the truth, a skill we need to learn more about and will have a chance to do so as he is an incredible trainer as well. I am really happy that Sean is continuing to grow in his leadership within the MCAN network and believe that the leaders of BIO are in good hands."

As part of the MCAN Network, BIO joins the following affiliates across the state which are also working on housing Brockton Interfaith Community, Essex County Community Organization, Pioneer Valley Project (Springfield), United Interfaith Action of Southeastern Massachusetts, and Worcester Interfaith, as well as affiliates I Have A Future (Boston) and Prophetic Resistance Boston. MCAN partners at the national level with Faith In Action.

Announcing the UU Used Book Sale!

The used book sale is still going on! Until further notice, we will be holding an ongoing Used Book Sale on a table in our Social Hall. Everyone is welcome to drop off used books at any time for the sale - and working condition DVDs and CDs are welcome, too! There will be a box to put donations/payments in. This is a great chance to do some decluttering at home - and to find new books for your summer reading!



Sunday Services and Church Events

HOLD THE DATE! For the second year in a row we are having a concert given by local legend Bobby Sweet in October. The date is **SATURDAY OCTOBER 5th** and the concert will begin at 8pm. We hope to see you there! Please EMAIL (do not call) the Administrator email at office@uupittsfield.org if you would like to reserve tickets, which are \$20 per person or \$30 per couple. We

We thank you for your support! Please use this QR code to donate to our church or mail a check to: Unitarian Universalist Church of Pittsfield, 175 Wendell Ave., Pittsfield MA 01201



will have beer and wine for sale and also snacks available.
RESERVE YOUR TICKETS NOW!

The UU Church of Pittsfield has found a wonderful Sunday Child Care person: Julia McComish. Julia will be at church every Sunday at 10:15 to meet our children, and be with them in the service till we sing them out with "Go Now in Peace!" as they go upstairs to their room. There is no fee for this child care.

IN GATHERING SUNDAY: SEPTEMBER 8TH - GIANT SALAD

It is wonderful to look forward to being with our church community again. Please note our In-Gathering Sunday with giant salad. In past years we have brought water from our travels and sea shore and our gardens, and I remember one salad service where a mischievous boy added gummy worms. On Sept. 8TH, Peggy Taylor and Carol Moak will host the service, and we are all invited to add to the salad as we share a memory from summer, and watch our bowl fill with stories, greens and ingredients. Chickpeas, carrots, scallions, fresh peas and herbs are all welcome. After the service we will sit together and eat this wonderful melange and get caught up on our summer's adventures.

Sept. 15th: Circle Sunday with music by Ben Foley. The theme is tales of summer and resilience. Sheila is the service leader.

September 22: Peggy Taylor: Unitarianism.

September 29th. Alexander Herrmann (theme TBD)

Sheila McKenna, Sunday Services Chair

Office for Rent

We have an office for rent! Room 23, which is right at the top of the stairs to the 2nd floor, is now vacant and is being cleaned and painted by our Building & Grounds Committee. Please contact Rachel Occhiogrosso-Schwartz, our Building Use Chair, for more information at rachel@thedollhausberkshires.com.

Social Hour Needs You!

We are all so appreciative of Ben running the social hour following services. Sign up to help using the sheet in the Social Hall on the table, and passed around in Sunday Service during Joys and Concerns - it makes such a difference!