



# First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

Connect. Inspire. Engage.

To the members and friends of FUSIT,

As Unitarian Universalists, we are called to the principle of justice, equity, and compassion in our lives. We are called to create and build systems that allow for the inherent worth and dignity to be honored and upheld for all people. As Unitarian Universalists, we are committed to dismantling systems of marginalization, oppression, and systemic white supremacy in our communities, ourselves, and our faith tradition.

We acknowledge that our faith tradition, and this congregation in particular, has not always been on the right side of history. There have been moments when Unitarians, Universalists, and Unitarian Universalists have fought for justice and equality, and there have been times when we have stayed silent or contributed to the mistreatment and oppression of others. We also acknowledge that as members of our faith tradition we are, more often than not, speaking from a place of privilege, if we speak at all.

We will not be silent or complicit. We must speak up. Our country has been founded on a history and system of generations of violence against black and brown people. We are witnessing and living the uncovering of continued current violent racism within our justice, healthcare, economic, electoral, and other systems. We are living in a time of continued police brutality, mass incarceration, and the policing of brown and black communities at alarmingly higher rates than white communities. Black and brown people are being impacted disproportionately by the coronavirus pandemic, and the lack of basic healthcare is a threat to all of us.

The most recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and Ahmaud Arbery by police officers and private citizens, have caused us again to proclaim that Black Lives not only matter, but are sacred, beautiful, and worthy of our care.

As the leadership of this congregation we are committed in the following ways to dismantling the systems of oppression, white supremacy, and racism within ourselves as individuals, our congregation, and our community.

As a congregation, we will:

- Engage in a year-long study process of race and racism to include consideration of adopting an 8<sup>th</sup> principle (<https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>) of UUism that states: “journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”
- Participate in local and state-level conversations about police brutality and reformation of our policing practices and strategies.
- Evaluate our policies (safety policy, in particular) and consider alternative procedures to replace any policies that involve police in congregational matters.
- Engage in spiritual development and education, as it pertains to our personal and congregational ideas about race, bias, justice as a spiritual practice, and systems of oppression and white supremacy.
- Explore the ways we can, as an organization and as individuals, understand and leverage our privilege and power toward the establishment of a more just and equitable society.

We realize that equality is a journey, and we will remain open to engaging in other ways as they arise. We acknowledge that this process will be imperfect, and are committed to engaging in this process alongside other congregations and organizations of all faiths, races, and ethnicities. We welcome you and your family to join us in this work.

With gratitude, humility, and hope,

Rev. Margaret Weis, Minister  
Andy Turner, President of Board of Trustees  
Wendy Salomon, Vice President of Board of Trustees  
Matt Hare, Clerk of Board of Trustees  
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