



# ITHACA

## UU Connections

2020 / 2021 Issue No.3

November 1-30, 2020

### *Ministerial Musings*

**Sunday Celebrations at 10:30 am**  
**View Sunday worship at [www.uuithaca.org](http://www.uuithaca.org)**

As we embark on our month-long journey with the Soul Matters theme of “Healing,” I want to invite us to reflect on how we might heal from our culture of white supremacy.

I know that the term white supremacy can be provocative. It might make you feel defensive or upset, and may feel like it’s not a great fit for you or for this congregation. The idea of white supremacy is not what we may imagine it to be – white hoods, confederate flags, and torches. It can be that, but it can also be much more subtle.

White supremacy is the idea that white culture is superior to the cultures of other races and ethnicity. It shows up in ways that those of us who are white may not even notice in our daily lives and interactions. This article is a powerful resource that might help you better understand how white supremacy culture works: <https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html>

It outlines and explains various characteristics of white supremacy culture, and offers antidotes or alternative ways of being. Some characteristics of white supremacy culture include:

- |                              |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| *Perfectionism               | *Either/Or Thinking      |
| *Sense of Urgency            | *Power Hoarding          |
| *Defensiveness               | *Fear of Open Conflict   |
| *Quantity Over Quality       | *Individualism           |
| *Worship of the Written Word | *Progress is Bigger/More |
| *Only One Right Way          | *Objectivity             |
| *Paternalism                 | *Right to Comfort        |

Your leadership is actively working to address the ways that white supremacy culture is showing up in our midst – as individuals, a congregation, and a community. Healing is not a destination, but a process that can be gradual and may include setbacks. As we further understand the ways that white supremacy culture shows up in our congregation and our community, I invite you to reflect on the alternative ways we might behave. I also invite you to become involved with the many efforts going on at FUSIT to address these issues and come to a place of healing and justice.

With gratitude,  
Rev. Margaret

#### **Meetings with Rev. Margaret**

Looking for a meeting with Rev. Margaret?  
Please visit this link to see availability and set up a time. <https://calendly.com/weis-rev>

#### **Our Vision**

As the Unitarian Universalist presence in Ithaca, we envision ourselves as a vibrant, dynamic community. We cherish fellow seekers, nurture open dialogue and spiritual growth, and inspire action on matters of conscience, serving as a beacon of reason and hope in our interconnected world.

*Reminder! Daylight Saving Time Ends November 1st*

Newsletter of the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca (FUSIT), New York

# Religious Exploration News

*For information about Religious Exploration, please contact Emily Richards at [dre@uuithaca.org](mailto:dre@uuithaca.org).*

## Greetings from the DRE

Dear FUSIT Community,

The holidays are fast approaching and this time of year can bring so much excitement and anticipation when you have young people in your house! It can also bring up expectations that can be hard to fulfill, whether we are living during a pandemic or not. If there are ways that we can support you and your family, please let us know.

A huge thank you to Leah O'Connor, Sarah Wright, and Kelsey Underwood for their help getting all of the boxes out to families this October who were unable to pick them up.

With pick up for our UU Crates for November landing on Halloween I will be in need of extra helpers to get these packages out to families that need this assistance. Please let me know if this is something you can commit a small amount of your time to helping with.

If you have a child or youth you would like to be added to our Religious Exploration program to receive weekly emails and monthly activity boxes, you can contact me at the email address provided above.

*Emily Richards, Director of Religious Exploration*

## Healing

This month we're exploring the many ways our UU faith invites us to become "A People of Healing." As we continue to navigate this new reality and way of life we can practice the skills needed for healing history, healing with gratitude, and healing with service to others.

May you find comfort and healing in your own life. Blessed be.

## UU Crate for November

I hope that you have had a chance to explore your UU Crate for October, perhaps you have a letter in the mail and are waiting to listen to wisdom you will receive in response, or have been listening to the sound of windchimes or a rainstick. Or maybe all you've had a chance to do was spend a couple of minutes unwinding by coloring or reading a story together.

November packages will be available for pick up on the FUSIT porch during the following times:

Friday, **October 30th** from 4:30 pm-6:30 pm

Saturday, **October 31st** from 10:00 am-12:00 pm

*Show up in costume for an extra treat!*

## RE Zoom Meetings

Continuing this November RE participants are invited to join a once monthly Zoom meeting on Sundays from 12:30 pm to 1:00 pm. These meetings will be divided up based on age and will allow more opportunities to stay connected with one another and our faith.

The monthly schedule will be as follows:

PreK - 2nd Grade - **November 1st**

3rd Grade - 5th Grade - **November 8th**

6th Grade - 8th Grade - **November 15th**

9th Grade - 12th Grade - **November 22nd**

## Facebook Story Time

Weekly story time with Audrey is continuing live on our Facebook page! Please join us each Tuesday at 7:00 pm for an opportunity to gather together virtually and enjoy a story that touches on our theme for the month.

## Ways to Help

Even though we are not meeting in person for the foreseeable future there are still ways you can help! One way to do so is to join our monthly Zoom meetings. Please reach out if you are interested in volunteering for the RE program or joining the RE Team, contact information is provided above.

## Joys and Sorrows

Our thoughts are with Jeanette Knapp and her family after the loss of her husband, Warren, who passed away suddenly on October 3. He was 82.

Our thoughts are with Karl and Aileen Fitzke after the passing of Karl's mother. Cards can be sent to Karl and Aileen Fitzke, 600 Austin Lane, Herndon, VA 20170.

**Side With Love Collection**  
will be returning this month. Check for details in the mid-week announcement.

### Are you a "techie"? We need you!

FUSIT is entering a new frontier in Sunday worship production. During the first week of November, we will be upgrading our AV equipment to include mounted video cameras, enhanced mic'ing, and the ability to livestream from the sanctuary!!! (I know, we are so cool!) Here's the catch, we need folks to be trained in how to use this equipment so we can build our tech team. Does this sound like something you might be interested in? Are you interested in learning more? Join us for a training on **November 5th**, or email Jessica in the office for more information.

### Soul Matters Material for November on Healing

Our November worship theme at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca is Healing. This month's packet includes a few short readings, spiritual exercises, and discussion questions for you to consider. Here is the link: <https://tinyurl.com/fusit-SM-healing>.



### Green Tip From the Environmental Interests Circle

As hiking becomes more popular, some trails are becoming more damaged. To minimize your impact, hike on less popular trails, avoid wet trails, leave the trails as little as possible when passing other hikers, follow Leave No Trace practices, and clean up after others. Eastern Mountain Sports offers more guidance.

### Sunday, November 1: Hearts Breaking Open, Rev. Margaret Weis

As we grapple with the challenges of our current lives, let us reflect on how our hearts have been broken open to create space for new possibility. What is the difference between a heart breaking and a heart breaking open? How is breaking open a way toward healing?

### Sunday, November 8: Healing the World: A Reflection on Tikkun Olam, Rev. Margaret Weis

In the Jewish tradition, the term "tikkun olam" refers to the healing of the world. As our country moves forward from the recent election, we will reflect on what healing looks like and how community gathers together in the face of big challenges.

### Sunday, November 15: Relationship and Healing: A Dialogue on Race

Rev. Margaret Weis and Peaches Gillette

Our relationships can be a source of harm and of healing, depending on how we are in them. Join us for an interracial dialogue between Rev. Margaret and Peaches Gillette as they explore together what it means to be in relationship across racial differences.

### Sunday, November 22: Truth, Healing and Cranberry Sauce: A Thanksgiving Service

Rev. Margaret Weis

In our annual Thanksgiving service, we will reflect about the untrue stories we've been taught over the years, the true stories we haven't been taught, and the ways that ideas, concepts, and even recipes need to be tweaked sometimes.

### Sunday, November 29: Gratitude as Healing, Ministers from the Central New York Cluster

This service will feature the ministers from congregations in Ithaca, Syracuse, Binghamton, Utica, Oneonta, Cortland, Watertown, and Athens, PA as we reflect on the power of gratitude to heal us in challenging times.

**Leave a message for Jessica or other FUSIT staff by calling the Google voicemail number at (607) 218-2088 and she will pass any information along or call you back.**

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Rev. Margaret Weis  
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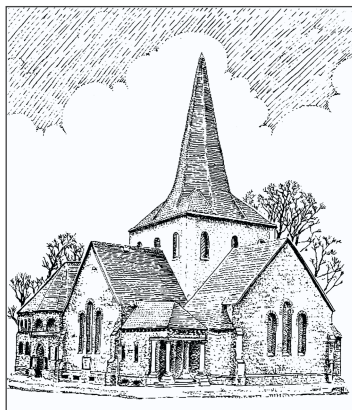
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**Join the FUSIT (internal) Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/171869686459/>**

**First Unitarian is a UUA-recognized (LGBTQ) Welcoming Congregation**

The First Unitarian Society of Ithaca  
306 North Aurora Street  
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Ithaca, NY 14851-0006



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Visit our Website and get  
your newsletter:  
[www.uuithaca.org](http://www.uuithaca.org)

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## Possible Ponderings

### *The theme for November is Healing*

*Possible Ponderings is an offering of ways you might consider engaging more deeply with the theme or reflecting on the ways the idea of Healing shows up in your life.*

**November 1-7:** Have you ever felt your heart break open? What was that like?

**November 8-14:** In our current political climate, what steps can you take to heal the world?

**November 15-21:** Who might you have a dialogue with about race that could offer an alternative perspective?

**November 22-29:** Who is missing from your table for whom you are grateful? How might you build a longer table in your life?

### Possible Thanksgiving Zoom Gathering

If someone is willing to host a zoom Thanksgiving gathering, please contact Rev. Margaret at [minister@uuithaca.org](mailto:minister@uuithaca.org).

### Social Media Connections

You can find out about events happening in our congregation, see pictures of past events and connect with other UUs. Like and follow us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/FUSofI/> Instagram [www.instagram.com/ithacauus](https://www.instagram.com/ithacauus) and Twitter, @IthacaUUs.

### Pastoral Emergencies

*In case of pastoral need, the Rev. Margaret Weis can be reached at 607-218-4281 (cell) if you need to speak with her.*

**Did you know  
you can text in your donations to  
the offering plate on Sundays? Simply  
text 607-260-6616 with the amount +  
offering (eg: \$5 offering) to donate  
by phone. It's super easy!**

## Babies First Appeal

Babies First is an all volunteer organization, in its 27th year at FUSIT, that provides tangible help to babies, young children, and their families in need within Tompkins County by offering free baby equipment. Referrals are received directly from individuals or from 18 plus non-profit public agencies throughout the county. Babies First accepts "like new" baby equipment including **pack 'n plays, strollers, high chairs, baby carriers etc.** BF also provides new unused car seats for infants and toddlers.

Covid 19 shut down Babies First in March. We began serving the needs of the community again in June and since then have given away lots of equipment and 13 car seats. We have worked with Tompkins County Action, DSS, The Day Care Council, The Village at Ithaca, refugee programs and others as they opened up.

We missed our Spring fundraiser and the future of Babies First looks bleak unless we can raise some funds to buy car seats. We currently do not have enough car seats to meet the need. Donations of equipment or financial contributions are always welcome. Please consider this and if you chose to help out with Babies First, make your check out to FUSIT

## Coffee Hour Hosts

Coffee hour hosts are in charge of starting the zoom coffee hour, welcoming people to the session, opening the space for the sharing of joys and sorrows (which is facilitated by another assigned person), and creating breakout groups for the remainder of the session. Please email Rev. Margaret and let her know if you are interested in helping to create this important time in the life of our congregation.

## Service Auction Update

Our annual auction has been moved to February 2021! We are excited to offer a new and exciting way to engage with this favorite annual fundraiser! If you are interested in being on the planning team, please contact [board@uuithaca.org](mailto:board@uuithaca.org).

## Book Discussion Group

The next Book Discussion Group meeting is scheduled for Friday, **November 6**, at 12:30 pm at Stewart Park. The book is *Talking to Strangers* by Malcolm Gladwell. Please bring a mask and lawn chair.

The November meeting may revert to Zoom depending on the weather. Contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen at [streidmull@gmail.com](mailto:streidmull@gmail.com).

## Moving Forward on Environmental Issues: A Post-Election Chat

**Sunday November 22, 7:00 pm**

Whatever the outcome of the election, we need action on a lot of environmental concerns. Climate justice. PFOA contamination. Fracking. Floods and wildfires. Resource extraction on public lands. And much more. The FUSIT Environmental Interest Circle invites you to join us in an open-ended conversation about environmental issues that concern us. What environmental matters concern you, and why? What shall we do together about them in the communities, state, country, and world we are part of? Come join us to talk about what our concerns are and how we can take meaningful next steps. Sponsored by the EIC.

Zoom link:

<https://ithaca.zoom.us/j/93359113407?pwd=WExicFVNMTVZFUopINWVoa1JDNEoyQT09>  
Meeting ID: 933 5911 3407

Passcode: 738672

One tap mobile: +16468769923,,93359113407#,,,,,0#,,738672#

## Board of Trustees November Meeting

The Board of Trustees will hold their monthly meeting on Wednesday, **November 11**, from 6:30-8 pm via Zoom. All interested persons are invited to attend. Please contact Andy Turner at [ast4@cornell.edu](mailto:ast4@cornell.edu) for the zoom link.

## Upcoming Events



### Common Read Book Group: *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons* by Imani Perry

Each year, the UUA suggests a book for members and friends of our congregations to read together. The books that have been read are listed at [www.uua.org/read](http://www.uua.org/read). Often, these books focus on a particular social justice or other spiritually-grounded issue. Join Rev. Margaret for this monthly book group meeting. We hope you'll take part in this new tradition of engaging our minds about issues that are important to Unitarian Universalists and the world we so deeply love.

—**November 4th @6-7:30 pm**

Join Rev. Margaret for our monthly Common Read book group where we will be discussing *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons* by Imani Perry. Please email [minister@uuithaca.org](mailto:minister@uuithaca.org) to sign up and receive the zoom information. For a copy of the book, visit Skinner House Books, Inspirit (UUA bookstore), or contact Rev. Margaret if you need assistance.

### Pub Theology - Wednesday, November 18th

Join us for an evening of good fellowship and conversation. We will gather at 6:30 on Zoom and reflect together on the monthly theme of HEALING. Invite your friends! Hope to see you there! Pub Theology usually takes place on the **3rd Wednesday of every month.**



## Healthy Communication Practices for the South-Central NY Cluster

**Saturday, November 7, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm EST**

"He said, she said, they said, and now we have a conflict!"

"I don't remember what we fought about, but I do remember how I felt when you yelled at me."

"When I hit the 'send' key, I didn't expect this reaction!"

With so many ways to mis-communicate and misunderstand in our congregations, we need to develop healthy communication habits and norms. This workshop will give you the tools for healthy, direct and compassionate communication among your leaders, members and friends.

There will be **3 hours of prework** to provide the grounding for the live workshop. Links to the prework will be provided in your confirmation email.

The workshop itself will be interactive, led by the Rev. Evin Carvill-Ziemer and the Rev. Renee Ruchotzke. The workshop is free, but registration is required to receive the zoom information.

**[Register Now](#)**

**[Link to the Event Page](#)**

## Virtual Christmas Eve Service

Please join the greater-Ithaca community in this candlelight service held virtually on our website and YouTube. The service begins at 7:30 pm. Tune in early to experience some of your favorite Christmas music at 7 pm. Although we are not able to be together physically this Christmas Eve, let us gather our hearts together to share the beauty of story, music, and candlelight. Let us bring the spirit of Christmas into our lives and out into the world.

## Post-Election Zoom Vigil for Healing

We are planning a vigil for Wednesday, **November 4**, from 4-8 pm, with the assumption that we might still be in a place of uncertainty about the outcome of the election. If you are able and willing to be a facilitator for an hour slot between 4-8 pm on **November 4** for our Post-Election Vigil, please let Rev. Margaret know. Music director Stephanie Ortolano and Rev. Margaret will be creating a small beginning that will be played at the top of each hour (4, 5, 6, 7 pm) with a meditation and a piece of music. Then we will just have the chance for people to be with one another and share their feelings about the uncertainty.

## Message from Rev. Margaret Weis and President of the Board, Andy Turner

Dear FUSIT members and friends,

We are so grateful to those of you who attended our September 13th congregational meeting. It was great to have a chance to hear your hopes and dreams for FUSIT as we continue and deepen our work to become an anti-racist congregation. Thank you for your enthusiasm!

As a leadership team, we have been considering the ideas that came from the meeting and how they connect with our mission and purpose as a congregation. The summary of the meeting input and our work on creating categories to guide the next steps is available [here](#). From that assessment, we are categorizing the efforts into three categories: institutional policies and procedures; programming opportunities; and external partnerships.

The board will be taking the lead on the institutional policies and procedures, and will be creating an ad hoc team to take a hard look at our administrative systems and policies to assess for bias and other issues of inequity. We will seek support from the UUA as we move this part of the process forward. The Board will be reaching out directly to individuals who are well qualified to support this work and consulting with advisors who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

The staff and ministry teams will be taking the lead on programming opportunities and external partnerships. An initial goal will be to move forward as a congregation with the Living the Pledge to End Racism [program](#). We currently have five people participating in the program on a national level, and will be centering our Sunday, December 6th worship service on the program itself. This service will include an opportunity to hear from the creators of the program and how it will impact our congregation and community. We anticipate our first major training opportunity to occur during the first weekend in December, with twenty participants. If you are interested in being part of this initial cohort, please email Rev. Margaret at [minister@uuithaca.org](mailto:minister@uuithaca.org). We will be strategic in our selection of initial participants and are hoping for folks who are able and willing to facilitate groups this winter and spring (following training, of course).

Further, we are creating an Anti-Racism Ministry Team to guide the planning and implementation of programming efforts. If you are interested in being part of this team, please email Rev. Margaret at [minister@uuithaca.org](mailto:minister@uuithaca.org). Our first meeting will take place by the end of October.

As far as external partnerships are concerned, there are already some projects underway with small groups, such as a partnership with Village at Ithaca. For more information on this project, please contact Fred Balfour ([Fred.Balfour@gmail.com](mailto:Fred.Balfour@gmail.com)). Our Side with Love and Share the Plate efforts are continuing and we are taking extra effort to choose organizations that provide resources to traditionally underserved and marginalized communities.

We know there is a lot of work ahead of us, and that we are off to a good start. We thank you for engaging with these opportunities and for continuing to utilize the resources in the greater Ithaca community to help end racism.

With gratitude and courage,

Rev. Margaret Weis, Minister

Andy Turner, President of the Board of Trustees